

New Mission News

COMFORTING THE AFFLICTED AND AFFLICTING THE COMFORTABLE SINCE 1980 • NOVEMBER 1997



Mission Spacewalker"

Photo by Greg Rodin.

Valencia Gardens gets a \$23 million renovation grant

Non-profit developer promises projects will be improved with no tenant displacement

by Carolyn Abate

Just days after Valencia Gardens' \$23 million Hope VI grant was approved, the six hundred residents of the public housing unit began questioning their fate. The *San Francisco Chronicle's* Matier and Ross incorrectly reported that Valencia Gardens would be demolished. The rumor has sparked a flurry of controversy throughout the projects. Instead of residents looking forward to the good news of reconstruction, some now say they are scared. Ron Dunn, who has lived at Valencia Gardens for two years, says he now wakes up every morning wondering if he will get evicted. "I sleep with a suit case by the door," he sighed.

The Mission Housing Development Corporation (MHDC), the nonprofit tapped to facilitate the redevelopment says the public housing unit will not be demolished. In an attempt to squash rumors to the contrary, they wrote a letter to the *Chronicle* correcting the Matier and Ross report. A retraction has yet to be printed.

"The residents do not want Valencia Gardens demolished," acknowledged MHDC's Solomon Greene. "That has been

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Photo by Arthur Hudson

Eyes on the Sparrow

Sparrow Alley, one of the Mission's more notorious outdoor shooting galleries, was taken over and transformed into a theater by the dance group Flyaway Productions, the Charming Hostess Trio and performance vocalist Pamela Z, who collaborated in the very athletic production of "Sparrow's End". To the accompaniment of musicians perched on another fire escape across the alley, dancers moved up and down, over and under the fire escape and onto the roof of the Sunrise Hotel, as pictured above.

On three separate weekends in October, hundreds of spectators watched in fascination as the performers descended into the

alley and for a time transformed one the City's most despair ridden stretches of asphalt into a celebration of spirit.

"Sparrow's End" was conceived and directed by aerial dancer Jo Kreiter. "We offer this dance to the alley's residents, it neighbors, the children who live nearby and pass through, to regular and occasional passersby. We offer this dance with the belief that art transforms," Kreiter wrote in program notes for the production. Intersection for the Arts, just across Valencia Street from Sparrow, presented the event as part of their ongoing ExperiMission Project.

Delancy Street takes charge of juvenile justice system overhaul

Three pilot projects will get underway in the Mission by the beginning of 1998

By Carolyn Abate

Shots ring out on a street corner, as a car speeds off into the night. A young man lays unnaturally still on the sidewalk while he bleeds to death. This scenario, or one very similar, has become all too common in communities throughout the City and the nation. In the last five years, gang violence has claimed the lives of 56 people in our neighborhood, alone. Beginning the first of the year, the City's overwhelmed and antiquated juvenile justice system will be re-energized by a three part youth violence prevention program based in the Mission, and directed by the Delancy Street Foundation.

When the Delancy Street Foundation was asked to conduct a study for the San Francisco Juvenile Justice System, the first thing the nonprofit looked at was youths already in Juvenile Hall. With the help of police and community agencies, Delancy Street took a "snapshot" of 164 youths who passed through Juvenile Hall on a given day. Craig Miller, of the Delancy Implementation Team, says that "one kid, his parents had committed suicide when he was eleven, and all his problems started exhibiting after that." Miller recalls that most of youth involved in the assessment had some similar points in their lives. But what upset Miller and his colleagues the most was no record of anyone intervening.

That phenomenon set the tone for discussions, talks that included the youth offenders, themselves. Gerald Miller, a resident of Delancy Street who worked on the interviews explains. "A lot of studies have been written (about kids) but nobody ever asked them what they thought. We had a chance to go in and ask them: what do you think is wrong with the system, what do you feel you need in you life to make things go better?"

What has developed is a comprehensive action plan for the City's juvenile justice system, designed to address not only the stalemate found in the traditional criminal justice system, but also to provide intervention and alternatives in the lives of youthful offenders. The plan is funded by a \$5.4 million grant, awarded by the California Board of Correction, and will start with six new programs, to be implemented over the next three years. Under Delancy Street's guidance, three pilot programs that emphasize community involvement through personal accountability and character development, Safe Corridor, Community Assessment and Early Risk-Resilience, are headed for the Mission by January 1998.

Safe Corridors

The first pilot program, Safe Corridor, is based on Mission Street and focuses on the

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Ballot Endorsements



Treasurer - Susan Leal

Of the three candidates running for office, Susan Leal is obviously the most qualified. She has a degree in Economics and Law from UC Berkeley, and served as chair of the city's Finance Committee while a member of the Board of Supervisors. Leal is responsible for the legislation that created a moratorium on new bars and liquor stores in the Mission, something that has made for a significantly better environment in our community.

Both of her opponents seem determined to make the Treasurer's office a vehicle for political activism, which would simply boil down to playing politics and 'politically correct' mongering with the City's money. Joel Ventresca, after a bit of resume padding, comes off as a credible candidate. He has never held but perennially seeks elected office. This is not a rookie position. Lucrecia Bermúdez would certainly add a Paris Commune type of excitement to city finances, and while some of our readers probably find this appealing, Bermúdez does not make a convincing case that she has the experience necessary for the job.

As the front runner in this race, Susan Leal has been the subject of some truly nasty and farcically sloppy smear tactics. These attacks should not obscure the fact that she is one of the City's most able and honest elected officials.

City Attorney -

The incumbent is running unopposed. Your vote really doesn't matter here, but due to a quirk in the law we're having the election anyway.

Propositions A and B

Although a good case can be made for upgrading the city's water system, these two propositions would result in a hefty hike in the water bills for San Francisco residents. The reason the water system is in such bad shape in the first place is because since 1982, revenues from hydro-electric power sales from San Francisco's Hetch Hetchy holdings, which should have gone into routine maintenance and modernization, have been diverted to the city's general fund. Politicians decided raiding the Hetch Hetchy treasure chest was easier than making hard decisions about how to deal with annual budget shortfalls. Now,

you are being asked to pay the price. Power sales income should underwrite these water projects, not the taxpayers. Vote No.

Proposition C

Police and firefighters that were hired after 1980 accepted a retirement plan with fewer benefits in exchange for a \$40,000 cash payment. Many of them were either women or minorities who, due to harassment and hostility from co-workers, didn't see themselves serving out enough time on the job to collect full benefits, anyway; making this arrangement seem like a good deal. Since 1980, things have changed dramatically for women and minorities in both departments, and now 243 of them want to pay back the \$40,000 and get their full retirement benefits. Seems only fair. Vote Yes

Proposition D

This Charter Amendment simplifies language regarding leasing arrangements by the City and requires Board of Supervisor approval for leases generating more than \$1,000,000 a year. It's a simple, good-housekeeping measure. Vote Yes

Proposition E

This would remove restrictions on the city's Youth Commission, and give it status powers equal to other city commissions. Vote Yes

Proposition F

The ACLU and folks obsessed with the separation of church and state convinced the courts that the Mt. Davidson Cross, located in a city park is in violation of the US Constitution and should be removed from public land. This proposition would allow the sale of the small portion of the of the park where the cross stands to a private group, thus ending the constitutional dilemma. Controversies like this are generated by people with too much time on their hands and restless lawyers. Vote Yes

Proposition G

This measure would provide some, but not much, control over sleazy campaign consultants, requiring them to file reports explaining exactly how they are going about prostituting the democratic process. Should make for amusing reading. Vote Yes

Proposition H

The one good thing the Loma Prieta Quake did was to knock the hell out the Central Freeway, providing a good reason for tearing it down. Now a bunch of automobile fanatics have put this proposition on the ballot to spend millions of dollars rebuild the thing. Of all the proposals on how to handle increased traffic flow on city streets following the freeway's closure, this is the most expensive (\$52 million). Freeways were a bad idea for San Francisco in the first place. Now that an act of God has corrected human error, let's just finish the job and tear it down. Vote No

Betrayals of trust led to the Credit Union fiasco

The Mission Area Federal Credit Union, which has been rocked by mismanagement and fraud, has finally stabilized itself — with no loss to depositors. The major obstacle remaining before normal operations and community oriented loan programs can resume, is the issue of more than \$200,000 that was misappropriated by a member of the Credit Union, in violation of credit union policy and the law. With the approval of previous management, the Mission Language and Vocational School was allowed to overdraw its account by \$219,000. At press time, MLVS had paid none of it back, recklessly jeopardizing the Credit Union's recovery efforts.

Most of our readers know what happens when they overdraw their accounts by just a few dollars: hefty bank charges and demands for immediate reimbursement. When the amount runs into six figures, ordinary citizens are arrested, prosecuted and jailed.

When the same crimes are committed by politically well-connected corporations, either profit or nonprofit, the consequences — if there are any — are dramatically less severe. What we have here is a Mission District replay of the savings and loan scandals of the eighties, with a social activist spin.

In the last thirty years, most American big cities have seen the rise of a social change establishment composed of non-profit organizations charged with remedying the ills of poverty and racism. A large portion of the funding for these organizations comes by way of our tax dollars, and it has been a sad but generally accepted fact that some of this is misused or poorly used by the groups that receive it. But since the people who run these organization are only getting back for community programs what the Feds, the State and the City took out in the form of taxes, there is a net gain for everybody, even when the inevitable grafting is factored in. However, when an organization becomes so arrogant as to eliminate the middleman and remove enormous amounts of money directly from the savings accounts of the poor and working people of the community they are supposed to be serving, things have risen to a new and unacceptable level of corruption. Such is the situation with MLVS.

The newly elected Credit Union board

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Editorial


Victor Miller

of directors is now taking a long hard look at MLVS and considering a civil suit. This may or may not lead to a restoration of funds, since it is not at all clear that MLVS has the money to pay back their withdrawals. This brings up the intriguing and unanswered question of where \$219,000 disappeared to?

One governmental agency that should be asking that question is the Mayor's Office of Community Development. MOCD is apparently going forward with plans to award MLVS a grant for \$150,000 to develop a culinary school. This won't even cover the overdraft and puts the City in the curious position of underwriting bad checks.

The process by which MOCD reviews funding applications should probably be given some scrutiny too, since the agency apparently didn't notice that MLVS, an organization they've funded for years, was running more than \$200,000 in the red.

This latest financial unbroglio will undoubtedly give ammunition to those who feel all social service organizations are either corrupt or unnecessary. The fact is that without the housing, job and legal services provided by nonprofits the social fabric of most inner city neighborhoods would be torn apart in civil disorder and riots. These institutions are an essential part of contemporary American life and, at the same time, they are institutions in crisis, facing greater and greater government cut backs. Those organizations that serve a legitimate function will only survive if they are able to maintain the trust and support of the communities in which they are based. Those that betray that trust and pillage for the sake of their own perpetuation will have to go — no matter how long they've been around or who they know.



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Delancy Street Continued from Page One

crime spots along this route. According to the San Francisco Police Department, the Mission District's juvenile crime rate is forty percent higher than other parts of the City, with peak hours from two to five in the afternoon, when school is out. Among other things, Safe Corridor is bringing police, merchants and community groups already involved into one coordinated approach. C. Miller says this could include encouraging merchants to hire more teens or having community groups improve after-school programs. An increase in police foot patrols on Mission Street is also expected, but with an emphasis on community policing.

One part of Safe Corridor will center around youths on probation for serious crimes. "There are about thirty kids on probation who meet that [criteria]," Craig Miller explains. "Police and probation will jointly supervise visits to their homes in the evening, checking on school. Really making sure they adhering to the conditions of their probation, which is attending school, no drugs or alcohol and curfew." Miller says this aspect of the Safe Corridor program also involves a community case-worker that will provide support to the family.

Community Assessment

The Community Assessment Center is the second pilot program. Craig Miller calls it a place that will link a youth offender to an intervention program, "not a detention center. It will be a place where kids go that will be staffed by health and community workers. There, they will receive a comprehensive assessment. Beyond that, those kids will receive a case-worker, which will then make sure the kid gets help. That doesn't happen right now."

In addition, he says, "We'll find out what's going on with the family; we'll find out what's going with school." If the problem is family issues, then the center will get the family down to the facility. "We want to make it the kind of place where kids know they are going to get some help." Craig Miller says youths that are arrested will still have to go through the court system and youths that commit serious crimes will have to go to Juvenile Hall. Although the assessment center will be located at the Tenderloin YMCA, the first youth offenders to be sent there will be from the Mission.

Risk Resilience

Early Risk Resilience, the third and final portion of the plan is probably the most complex pilot project. The program has the difficult and delicate task of taking youth that have certain characteristics in their lives that could lead them towards crime, and steer those children to a more productive path. Delancy Street is basing

this program on a theory that defines critical risk factors, such as heavy drug use, truancy and a parent with a history of crime, identifying a child for quick intervention. According to the report, 99 percent of the kids profiled from Juvenile Hall did not attend school and more than fifty percent had families involved with crime.

Miller describes their goal this way: "What we hope is to develop a system where [we know when] a kid has five or six or seven of these things, multiple risk factors. So if a kid has parent who goes to prison, and they are truant, and the teacher notices they aren't paying attention, and maybe the police have gone to the home — several things — those are the kids we want to pull into this system. A school knows when a kid is truant and probation knows when an adult goes to state prison. So part of that project is really, to link that information into a place to access it, and say if a kid has these five things, then they need early intervention." "

More importantly, the "resilience" program is designed to establish opportunities for kids. It seeks to identify an area of interest, in music, art or science, for example, and then connect the child to an art program or a mentor or teacher that can help the youth explore his or her interests. Finding mentors for youths offenders is crucial for the programs to succeed.

Gerald Miller says the best mentors are those who have had similar experiences. "I spent 13 years in prison, a drug addict, dope fiend, [who] ran around the Mission for years and years terrorizing people. I know what it feels like to be crazy and out there. But I know if you catch a kid or someone at the right time, they don't have to go through what I did. I also know you have to teach people things, in order to make their life different."

Craig Miller says that right now, the foundation is trying to establish a network among those groups involved, which range from those based in the community to churches and the police. He says the next three years will be a test for future Juvenile Justice System plans.

Until then, Delancy Street's primary concern is getting these programs off the ground, so that a real difference can be made in a child's life. "We want to develop an assessment that looks at strengths... [and] builds on these strengths, one that connects children and families to services, and that can protect them from all the things that are bad in their lives."



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Valencia Gardens

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the baseline for the project. The Mayor is aware and committed, and the Housing Authority is committed."

The nonprofit says renovations at Valencia Gardens are scheduled to begin in eighteen months. On their list is the addition of more than forty new units, plumbing and electrical work, seismic upgrading, and a new community center. Other improvements planned are handicap access to some of the downstairs units and the combining of two units to create larger apartments for families.

As in many of MHDC's other development projects, the new community center will act as a service center. "It will be a home for resources, vocational training, day care, after school programs," says Project Manager Diana Mejia-Peterson.

But the plan for Valencia Gardens does not chime with some tenant rights groups. Richard Marquez, of the Eviction Defense Network says the nature of the HOPE VI grant leaves him leery. "What we see are patterns that emerge once a site has been selected to be 'hope-sixed'. We see a kind of authoritarian style of making decisions...where the larger base of tenants are not democratically involved in making decisions in their future. If they are going to be renovated, then we are going to make sure that not one single tenant is displaced."

Greene says that tenant concerns are being addressed. "The next eighteen months will be geared to developing a relationship with the residents." He says tenant coordinators have been established to help other Valencia Gardens residents stay informed. Open meetings will be scheduled for tenants to attend and voice their concerns. Greene says the tenant contribution could carry over to the designing plans, giving residents a say on certain aspects of the new construction.

Relocation, however, may become a reality for at least a portion of Valencia Gardens' residents. Mejia-Peterson says the reconstruction will be done in phases, with the first phase requiring seventy

vacant units. That means some tenants will be offered Section-8 housing, either on a permanent or temporary basis.

She says the original proposal "provides an allowance for those relocated to be allowed to move back in, if they are in good standing." To the Housing Authority, good standing means paying rent on time and being in compliance with the Housing Authority's rules, among other things. Mejia-Peterson says MHDC hopes to develop a plan so that "before people are asked to relocate, they are assessed and in good standing, so there wouldn't be a need for rescreeing."

So there's the story. No demolition — unless in the tradition of 'if you don't like the news go out and make some of your own' — Matier and Ross want to come to the Mission and tear it down themselves. .



SFNSP

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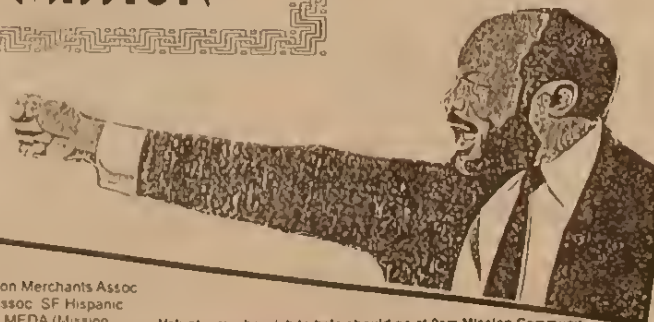
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Letters to the Editor

Freeway Hell

Dear Editor,

I've heard it said: "Careful. Don't wish too hard 'cause you might get it." Proponents of Proposition H, the Central Freeway retrofit proposal on the November 4th ballot, might heed this warning. Supporters of the initiative want an end to delays in traffic as well as in the Central Freeway replacement process. However, Proposition H, if passed, would do nothing to speed things up. In fact, it would add to the delays. The proposition requires that yet another traffic study be added to the pile of those already done. In addition, if Proposition H passes, Caltrans would be required to conduct yet another Environmental Assessment of the project, even though it already completed an environmental review of the Central Freeway replacement alternatives just last April. This would add additional delay.

Proposition H won't give us traffic relief, either. Instead, it would return gridlock to the Laguna/ Fell Street intersection where southbound Gough Street, westbound Fell Street, eastbound Oak Street and northbound Franklin Street traffic would all converge. Other replacement options that move and disperse traffic more efficiently have already received environmental review and are ready to go.

Ironically, voting for Proposition H would give the initiative's proponents just what they don't want — further delay of the process and traffic congestion. We all want traffic relief and a speedy replacement of the Central Freeway. That's why I'm voting NO on Proposition H.

Yours sincerely,

Robin F. Levitt, Architect

Kiss and Yell

Editor:

Lisa Milos tells us she was happy at the news that Galeria de la Raza's windows had been broken. For what reason? Was it Che or Mother Theresa that offended her the most? The Party or the Church, which is it?

Whether right or left, so many people seem to believe in the 'sacredness' of these images, that are after all just images. The Stalinoid embracement of Che or the Catholic right's adoration of Mother Theresa aside, what is most revealing here is the lack of humor exhibited by people like Lisa Milos. When I first saw the show, before it was opened to the public, I laughed because I thought it was funny and then warned the gallery attendant [that] the show would cause trouble. Does Lisa Milos really believe the second rock-throwing incident was about some esquin- cle upset over a coin eating telephone? For Lisa Milos' benefit, let me state **FREE- DOM DOES EXIST!**

Freedom to walk down the street without fear of being attacked for being a maricon. The freedom of the mind to express itself in a poem or a painting. If Lisa Milos is among those people constrained by Catholic inhibitions or Stalinist authoritarianism that is not the fault of any artist. Freedom begins when the shackles of feudal Catholicism or Stalinist authoritarianism are cast aside.

The fact that the Latino community will not comment on the smug hypocrisy of a

Church who issues statements about loving our gay children while their priesthood continues to sexually abuse them goes without saying. But responsible members of the Latino community, including intellectuals, social activists, artists and writers, continue to ignore a fundamental problem. The hatred of homosexuals is inherent in fascist ideology, right or left. This show at the Galeria may have been one of the first attempts to educate our community on this very issue, and what has been the reaction of a spokesperson like Lisa Milos? Glee that a window has been broken? Lisa Milos, with friends like you, who needs to worry about homophobic art-hating gringos like Pete Wilson and Jesse Helms?

Ronnie Burk

A Bad Case of Tourista

Editor,

It would be outrageous if someone in Marin wrote that non-white people shouldn't move there. Yet Robert Eligio Alfaro wrote in the October edition of New Mission News that non-brown people should not move here. This is racism. As a white person who recently moved to the Mission, I am offended.

Alfaro accuses suburban "tourists" of moving to the Mission because it's trendy. Excuse me, I moved here because I came to San Francisco without a job and the Mission was the only place I could find a landlord willing to rent to me. Alfaro thinks whites here are "perpetrators" trying to be "ethnic." I choose to live in the Mission because I like affordable rents, sun, burritos, diversity and access to public transportation. I'm no Latino, so does that mean I'm not allowed to appreciate affordable rents and great burritos?

Alfaro writes that suburban outsiders "work our community dry." This doesn't make sense. When I buy tamales from the lady at the 24th Street BART Station, I am supporting this community, not working it dry. Alfaro should be angry at anyone who supports Taco Bell instead of Tacqueria Cancun, the Tommy Hilfiger company instead of Community Thrift. I see the "homies" in nationally franchised Burger King and the "tourists" in locally-owned Royal Kitchen, and I wonder who's sucking this community dry?

Then Alfaro criticizes people who visit here from 9 to 5 but "do not even live in this community." So according to Alfaro, I'm damned if I do live here and even more damned if I don't. Alfaro is angry that rich people walk their dogs in this neighborhood, then angrier that previous-

ly, they didn't walk their dogs here. Okay, he's angry at gentrification. He's right, it would be a terrible shame if the Mission turned into Noe Valley, but is it so bad for the Mission to become a diverse and safe neighborhood for everyone?

Alfaro accuses me of ignorance, but he's the one who is ignorant of me. Alfaro writes that "tourists" should learn about the history of Chicanos and should work to help students in this community. Guess what, Alfaro, I do. I'm a teacher in the public schools and I'm a scholar of American history. Alfaro writes that suburban interlopers "never think about how it would feel to be a homie lying on the street shot and murdered." Of course I've thought about that, that's why I'm not involved with gangs!

I don't have brown skin, I don't wear gang-style clothes and I don't condone violence, but I do live here. I happen to be

white. I happen to have been born in the suburbs. I still have as much a right to live here as everyone else.

Sincerely,

Elaine Lewinnek

Editor's Note: Missing Person

In a letter from the San Francisco Women's Building we ran in our October issue the name of one of the co-authors, Meghan Mc Vety, was accidentally deleted. The News regrets the error.



New Mission News

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Miami-based poet Adrian Castro

Monday, November 10- the Monthly Beat at Vesuvio Café 235 Columbus

At 7:30pm we get started with Miami performance poet Adrian Castro who will bring his unique blend of Spanish, Yoruban, and English spoken word to North Beach after signing copies of his new book "Cantos to Blood and Honey" (Coffee House Press) at City Lights Books.

He will be joined by Russell Gonzaga- a Filipino immigrant-former gangster turned scribe...Alan Black- a local favorite giving us the Scottish point of view...Rounding out the evening will be Mike Manson, Ann Marino and a pair of homeless poets- The Moodsmiths.



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New Mission News

415-695-8702

Support for plan to put bike lanes on Valencia St. grows

Supervisor Jose Medina schedules November hearings to move cyclists' delayed proposal forward

By Mary Brown

After nearly a year of quietly plotting away, it seems that our wet dream of a traffic-calmed Valencia Street, with shiny new bike lanes and safe pedestrian islands, might actually become a reality. Supervisor Jose Medina recently requested a hearing to discuss bike lanes on Valencia, which is very tentatively scheduled for November 6. It's an important opportunity to show your support for accommodating people, rather than cars.

Whether you like it or not, you've no doubt noticed that Valencia street has slowly transformed itself into a thriving neighborhood, business and arts corridor. Unfortunately, car drivers have increasingly used Valencia as a traffic corridor, turning our neighborhood street into a noisy, polluted thoroughfare, with the 25 mph speed limit (yes, 25!) routinely being ignored. It's a messy situation that's dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists, and this overabundance of cars decreases the appeal and security of an otherwise thriving neighborhood.

That's why a bunch of neighbors, cyclists and merchants have worked together, to create a safer, quieter, less-congested Valencia Street — a street people go to, not through. Our proposal eliminates one car traffic lane in each direction and with the extra space this provides, we propose adding left hand turn pockets, safe bicycle lanes and a landscaped center median for pedestrian safety. We think these changes will result in less traffic noise, less exhaust, increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and an all around nicer place to live and work. An overwhelming majority of Valencia merchants from diverse backgrounds and businesses agree. Supporters of this plan even include a used car dealership and at least three auto repair shops!!

Bicyclists want it. Neighbors ask for it.

Business owners support us. So, what's the problem? As luck would have it, the one person who really, really, really doesn't like this idea is Bill Maher the big wig at Department of Parking and Traffic (DPT). Bill thinks there is plenty of room on Valencia for people, bikes and cars. Bill thinks we should all share the road. It can be very difficult and messy to share the road with a speeding two-ton hunk of metal. Riding home from work in early September, I saw the evidence of road sharing as paramedics scraped a bicyclist off the ground and hauled him away to SF General. Witnesses said he had been doored, then run over by another car. Ouch! Bill Maher clearly doesn't ride a bike on Valencia Street.

Most Mission residents probably agree that absurd traffic levels have reached the intolerable stage. There are simply too many cars squeezed into too little space. Finding and implementing appropriate transportation alternatives is one of the most crucial challenges facing the DPT and the City. Concentrating on long-term infrastructure solutions rather than trying to accommodate the ever-increasing number of cars, is a crucial step in relieving our overburdened neighborhood streets. Safe bicycle lanes on Valencia Street will encourage more people to escape their cars or our inept MUNI system, and commute by bicycle. Bicycle lanes will also be an important safety net for non-athletic cyclists, older cyclists and kids on bikes, people who shouldn't be harassed by impatient drivers when asserting their legal right to pedal safely into the middle of a traffic lane in order to avoid vehicle doors.

Call Jose Medina's office (554-5405) or the SF Bicycle Coalition (431-BIKE) to confirm the date and time for the hearing. Come show your support for a calmer, neighborhood-centered street: a street safe for everybody.

Shooting the Chavez Rapids

In other Mission bicycling news, a proposal to install bike lanes on Cesar Chavez Street, between Bryant Street and the Potrero/Bayshore/101 convergence, was loudly criticized at a Department of Public Works hearing, by residents (with garages) who opposed losing parking spaces in front of their homes. Fran Taylor, one of the bicyclists at the hearing, said that even though the residents were opposed to losing extra parking, they too, were worried about the dangerous car situation and reported many near misses between cars speeding in front of their houses. Residents also said they are sick of having freeways for sidewalks, and have been trying unsuccessfully to slow traffic for years.

Even though it's a big bummer to "shoot the rapids" on a bike under the freeway, a lot of cyclists do it every day, since there isn't a better alternative. During the rush hours, Taylor counted sixty rapids shooters. Traffic calming for the area is something that Taylor hopes residents and bicyclists will get behind, as well as the possibility of bicycle lanes on 26th Street.

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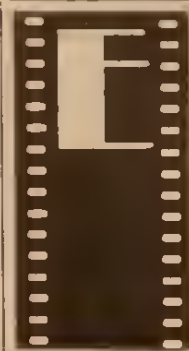
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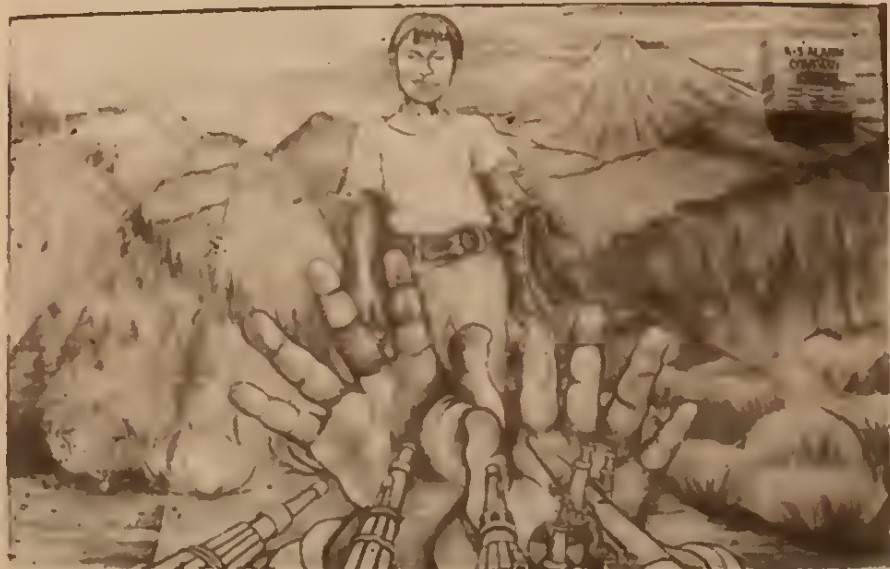
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Spacewalk: wild and crazy in the streets for twenty five hours

by Kurt Bier

To someone walking by on the last Saturday in October, it must have been a peculiar sight. Seated on the grassy slope leading up to the Dolores Park tennis courts were fifty or so "freaks," to use their own words, men and women of any age, many of them in costume. Some were devils painted in blue, some were devils painted in red and some were Neanderthal warriors who threw their spears about pell-mell. Others wore super hero costumes and others, shiny green hats.

Before them on the sidewalk, a show was taking place, involving acts of unimaginable daring and abominations of unspeakable horror. Women danced, whirling and teasing, mocking institutions with wiggling, giggling grace. Men played with fire, stuck nails up their noses and told tales of the strange and wondrous things lurking at the edge of consciousness.

Was the circus in town, or the gypsies or Cirque du Soleil? Wait, is this one of those Burning Man things? No, couldn't be that cause nobody asked us for seventy-five bucks, but it is an event within the purview of the Burning Man plume, and a logical follow up to the recent Defenstration project in SOMA. It is the first, and perhaps, annual, "24 hour Spacewalk," with the Mission chosen as its stomping ground, in an attempt to fuse art into our reality, for at least 24 hours. (The overarching theme can be browsed on the website Spacewalk@primitive.com.)

Hey, your not Zena!

Warrior Girl (WG), one of the event's organizers and a former Mission resident, speaks of giving back to the community: "When I lived in the Mission, I used to see people suffering, and I wanted to do something positive for the community, give a piece of myself back."

Indeed, throughout the evening many voices echoed her sentiments about bringing art out into the open and using it to scatter shadows lurking in alleys and around corners. Organizers of the Spacewalk had obtained financial support from over eighty businesses and individuals, and help from artists and performance collectives, such as the Mission World Sideshow Spectacular, the Society of Superheroes, and Persephonies Porno Mime Theater, to carry out these ideas. Popping up here and dropping down there, participants and observers gathered and dispersed throughout the Mission, adhering with surprising alacrity to an ambitious schedule of ongoing events: 12 a.m. at the corner of 16th and Harrison, 1 a.m. at the Potrero shopping center, 2 a.m. in front of the Victoria Theater.

For her part this evening, Warrior Girl is "Norma Jean," an up and coming star who, in the short span of 24 hours, gets discovered, becomes famous, falls to prey to fast times and drugs, recovers and then dies a tragic death, triggered by the overzealous paparazzi who chronicle her rise and fall. "The act is very much inspired by Diana's death," admits WG. At Dolores Park, she walks by a crowd generally unaware that she is Norma Jean, rising star or part of the show at all, for that matter. (The Mission Sideshow and the burlesque act that follows are the main attractions of the moment.)

Love those X Files

Most in the crowd seem to be regulars at these kinds of events. When not attentive to friends or acquaintances that are performing, they talk among themselves or

run around, with devils chasing superheroes and gothic glamsters laughing and sharing refreshments of all types. The final act struggles through the distractions and a poor sound system. Much of their efforts go unnoticed, though not for a lack of trying. Looking up, some people start or hoot when they see three nearly naked women, with tape over their nipples in a little 'X' and loose fitting G-strings riding around on hips, grinding to the sounds of the Squirrel Nut Zippers. A goat-boy prances among them, wagging a chili pepper that dangles from his loins. The lights from the tennis courts suddenly extinguish, plunging the scene into murky shadow. Everyone shouts. Neanderthal men shake their spears. Someone yells "Freaks!" Everyone agrees.

The crowd drifts off until an assembly of more than a hundred has gathered at the corner of 16th and Harrison Streets. The Spacewalk is picking up speed, more people, more time to drink, more audacity. The Cyberbus (www.cyberbus.com), a small school bus painted silver, pulls up to the curb. On top of it in a loosely constructed corral, drummers drum. On the hood, a devil and a superhero make out. From within, a man painted red emerges, carrying a boom box wrapped in duct tape and blaring Led Zeppelin. A woman climbs a telephone pole and thrusts her hips to the beat of the drums. The crowd cheers: "Let's have some fucking fun!!" Art cars pull up, one after the other. An old, white ambulance that's tricked out for Halloween elicits howls from the crowd. "Oh good, ice cream!" exclaims one over-enthused young woman, her pupils like saucers.

Since it's officially an event, cameras ogle the crowd. The Squirrel Nut Zipper crew adapts to this quickly, and abandoning their act, simply stand around nearly naked. Men with cameras interview their breasts. An older man in chinos bustles by. "Let me through," he says gruffly, and then whips out a sketchbook and begins to draw, inspired. Slater, the goat boy, stands by unmolested. "Nudity sells," he quips, summarizing their act, "pure, blatant and simple. You gotta push the boundaries."

"Molotov Malcontent, of the Mission Sideshow, watches it all with a short smile. "This is our act on training wheels," he explains. "This is an easy audience, but to really subvert the paradigms, to assert the changes we want, we need to take this show to the Financial District. There it could create more contrast, disrupt business."

The Midnight Superhero

Speaking of disruption, here come the police. A cruiser rolls down 16th Street



Spacewalkers came in all shapes and sizes. Photo by Greg Rodin

and drifts closer to the crowd. A hand emerges from an open window and then waves, politely.

Suddenly, spotlights play off the side of the brick building across the street. Lo and behold, from over the edge of the roof drops Norma Jean, fuchsia hair flying, flanked by members of the Society of Superheroes. She trickles down the wall like a drop of Kool-Aid and upon landing, is whisked away by an angel with a walky-talky and a bespectacled jester. Somewhat later, Kevin Matthew breathlessly explains what is happening: "This is the midnight appearance of Warrior Girl, where she changes from superstar to superhero. Everyone's a superstar and everyone's a superhero. We just have to discover the superhero inside us. That's what we're saying here."

Minister of Information, Matthew asks for an e-mail address to add to The Database. "Mac or PC?" he queries. "PC," I say. He rushes back across the street and embraces WG.

The drums beat louder, cigarettes flare into life and laughter plus conversation egg each other on. A police cruiser rolls by, slower this time, with tinted windows raised. Fortunately, scheduling demands a change of scenery and once again, the crowd disintegrates into the streets.

And into the night

When they reassemble in front of the Victoria Theater at 2 a.m., one sees what organizers saw when they dreamed up the Spacewalk. The Amazing Satano, a member of the Mission Sideshow, says it best: "We are reclaiming the Mission. We're less than fifty feet away from Crack and Heroin Central, and we are gathered here

without fear. There's not a better neighborhood in the City. We need to reclaim our space."

And truly, one immediately senses the simple and eloquent power invested in mobs united in purpose. The group of people gathered around a man who is shoving ten quarters up his nose remains immune to surrounding threats and violence. Homeless people join the crowd, drawn as much by the feeling of safety as by the relatively ho-hum acts of daring and rebellion being displayed before them.

The Spacewalk continues on into the next day, dragging ever so slightly toward the end. By 1 p.m., there is little evidence that the event ever occurred. The only thing that recalls it is a gigantic bed in a vacant lot, where people watched movies projected on an impromptu screen into the wee morning hours.

This is to WG's liking. "For 24 hours, the neighborhood is altered and then, it's back to normal." If her vision and that of her fellow conspirators is true, the Spacewalk will not return to the Mission next year. "We hope to take this to the Financial District," says WG, a little edge apparent in her voice. "We want to build a bridge between the corporate world and the art world. That's where art is needed most." She pauses, and then adds with a grin, "I really, really want to repel off the Transamerica building. That'd be the best."

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Film Arts Festival showcases the Bay Area independent filmmakers

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by vmiller

There are film festivals for all occasions, ethnicities and geographic subdivisions. Film Festivals have proliferated at a dizzying rate and it's sometimes impossible to determine which one offers a good time and which one just offers a weird time. The Film Arts Festival of Independent Cinema, the thirteenth of such, gives you the best of the Northern California indies. It gives you those bold and driven guys and gals, underfunded and

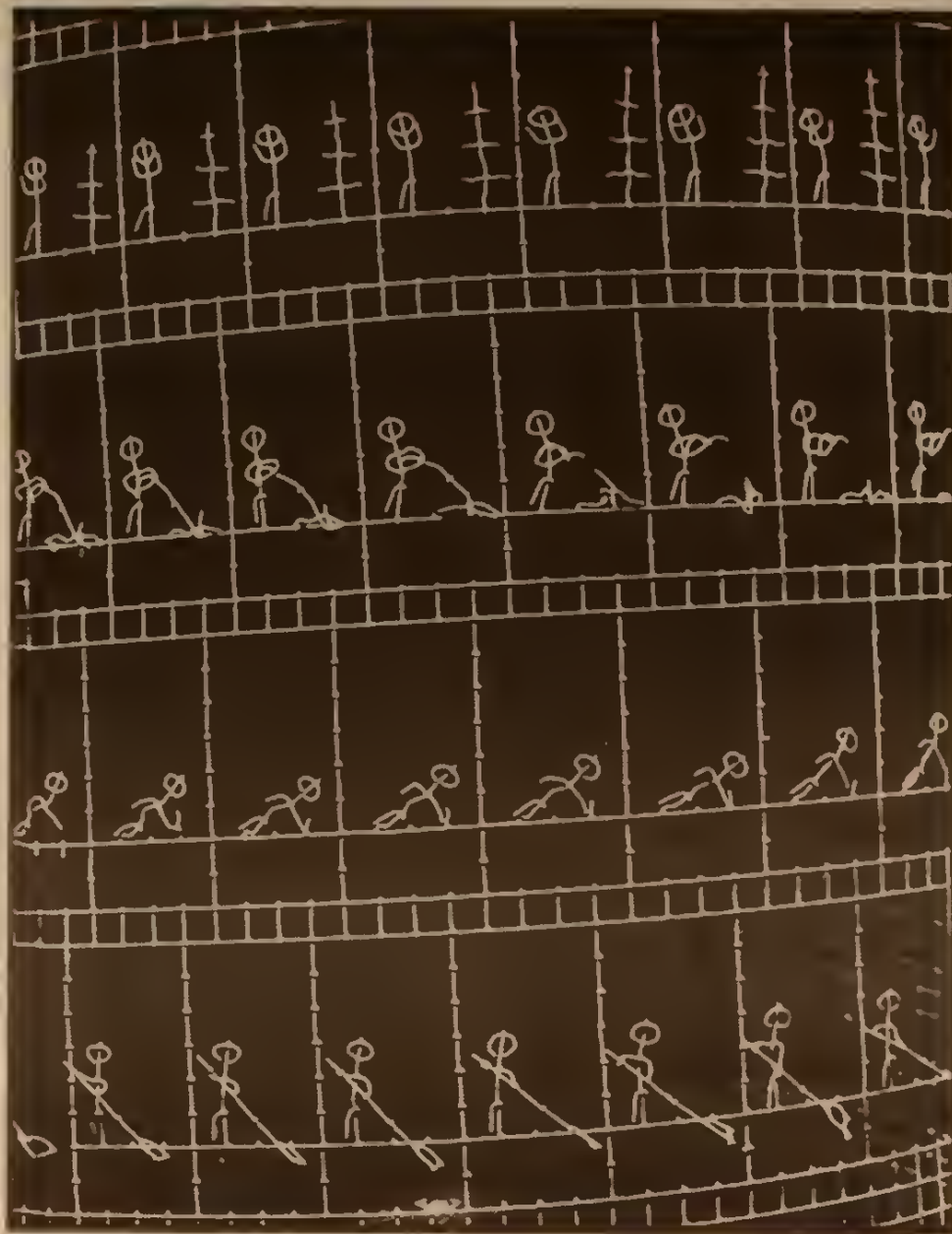
undistributed who disdain the exploding car cash and superstared thriller diller to lay down their own unique visions. They aim to do on film or tape one of the few things human beings are good for — telling stories.

The Film Arts Foundation exercises enough control in the selection process to assure that no single evening's screening is an assault on the sensibilities by the future Ed Woods or Alan Smithees. The five-day festival runs from November 5 to 9, with screenings at the Castro, Roxie and Main Library Theaters. What you can expect from any showing is the best blend of talent and inspiration from folks you've never heard of but will, and folks you'll never hear about again. The cinematic offerings come in animated, five-minute, full-length, dramatic, comedic, documentary and what-the-Hell-is-that forms. With eighty films on the program, there's something for everyone.

One show likely to delight everybody features the Club Foot Orchestra's Nik Phelps and the Sprocket Ensemble. The Club Footers are noted for their live performances with silent classics. Last year, Phelps organized the Sprocket Ensemble ultimate animated anti-hero, Dagget the Maggot.

For something completely different check out the three films about disabled athletes involved in extreme sports. The Chariot Races features the exploits of off-road wheelchair racer John Davis. Survival Run is about a blind man, Harry Cordellos, who runs Marin's unbelievably grueling Dipsea Trail Race and No Barriers follows a paraplegic mountaineer as he ascends Yosemite's El Capitan. (Free at the New Main Library November 7 at noon).

The Festival has a number of shows of short works, such as the November 7, 8 p.m. Roxie screening of ten films of 3 to 16 minute length (including Shoshanah Oppenheimer's five minute study of lovers fingers called Sour Juice), but there are also some feature length premieres. Two



Still from the animated short Wire Work, part of "The Best of the Sprocket Ensemble"

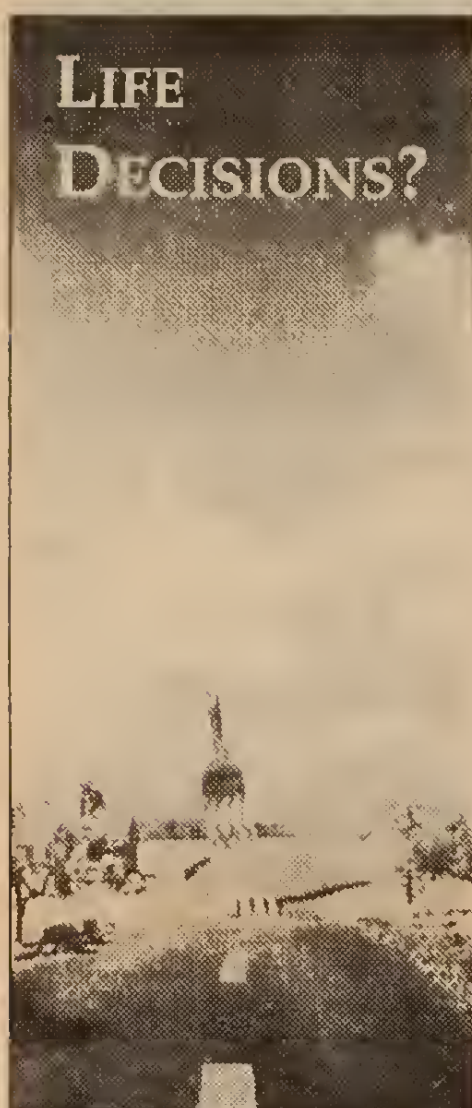
of these deal with Latin America. Terra Do Mar documents the threat the fishing culture of southern Brazil faces from ecological changes and commercial fishing practices. The film, which opens the Festival on November 5 at 9:30 p.m. at the Castro, is co-presented by the Consulate General of Brazil and the Rain Forest Action Network. An Opening Night Gala for the filmmakers follows. Paulina! tells

the story of a woman who fled a brutal life in rural Mexico to work for forty years as a maid for the rich of Mexico City. This will be a sneak preview of a work in progress, and ends the festival at the Roxie on November 9.

Women filmmakers are a large part of the festival. Thirty-nine of the 87 films were made women, including the 16 minute woman-builds-a-motorcycle epic, Dirty Fingernails (Roxie, November 6, 8 p.m.) There will also be three programs of films all produced by women on November 6, at 6 and 9 pm and on November 9, at noon at the Roxie.

Complete programs and schedules are available by calling the Film Arts Foundation at 552-FILM or on-line at www.filmarts.org.

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FLASHcards:

Tarot for the rest of us

BY JAKWITCH

Heeding the Deep Structure Need, Greed, Fate & Deeds The Card: The Tower



Good Harvest!

In the spirit of the TOWER, take a minute with me here. As we feast, remember: Anglos were America's first welfare recipients.

Native peoples 'round Plymouth, Massachusetts graciously included [read 'saved the butts of'] those Anglo 'fugees in a tradition of shared food/shared wealth. It was a seasonal celebration for redistribution of resources — so critical to survival before the onset of rough weather..

Redistribution of resources before the rough weather hits? Sound's a lot like November's FLASHcard.

The Wild Card.

TOWER'S the other wild card .

When TOWER appears, there's a little creative chaos coming your way.

TOWER reveals both the consequences of overuse of force to stop the natural flow of will/choice/life force and the use of NATURAL energy/aggression [forces of nature, sexuality, and evolving ideas] as a cosmic corrective. TOWER's traditionally associated with the planetary energy of Mars. We're so there.

Look around, TOWER's everywhere: wane of the Brit Royals; serious stress on that ol' devil, class system more homelessness with welfare cuts — just in time for winter

10-year anniversary of the Crash of '87 — any lessons learned??

Nature primed for a bit more deconstruction, Herself: El Niño's on the way dismantling of CIVIL RIGHTS through anti-affirmative actions measures, school voucherism.

TOWER says, in the dark night of the Soul, in the dark night of the Nation, there's always light. TOWER also says, things get too out o' balance, the only nitelite you get, Pilgrim, is a rocking, shocking bolt from the blue.

Look at the Card.

Royals fall from a tower high on a rock. Dicho says the wise person builds on a solid foundation. TOWER says, even that won't stop Mother Nature. Our rock-solid turret on its mountain foundation is struck by a bolt from the blue. Er, black, this deck.

Instead of utterly destroying the tower, lightning has struck a golden crown, and there's fire in three windows. The tenants fall. Husband and wife? Curiously, though she too, is upside down in freefall, the Queen's crown is intact. Her power is not utterly lost, because her intuition/reason — the crowning glory of human being — prepares her for survival. That polar aspect is represented by her robe of blue. As in blue = water = psychic/intuitive/receptive.e.

Surprise! What looks like rain is tongues of fire. Here, fire is the basic stuff o' life, sheer energy, falling to re-energize barren, rocky earth.

The lightning, coming from the right side of the card, represents natural law. Under the circumstances, nothing else could've happened. Forces of nature/natural law are unstoppable. Even when you see 'em coming.

So, get your individual and collective priorities in order, and learn to integrate MIND with INTUITION for positive ACTION. TOWER won't let us look away from the great truth: CHANGE! The elemental forces of life make apocalypse as often as they make paradise. The secret of the three windows, one above, two below, re-minds us that at the moment of entry into this earth-flesh orbit, That Which Was One Thing is immediately divided. TOWER says learn to work with polarity . . . or perish.

The TOWER is also the negative snapshot of the original Stairway to Heaven, or Q'bala/Tree of Life. In its reversal find its solution.

Likewise, perhaps The New Yawker's Oct. 27 issue, featuring an incredible, TOWER-related article, "THE RETURN

OF KARL MARX," signals a curious reversal in a number of realms. The headline asks: Was he right about Capitalism?

Seems a Wall Street mogul who decided to remain unnamed, confessed to the author, "The longer I spend on Wall Street, the more convinced I am that Marx was right."

Among other ideas including the polarity of the dialectic and class struggle, the NY'r piece contends Marx's understanding of capitalism — with its tendency to enforce monopoly and globalism — prophetically demonstrates capitalism's inherent need for strong regulation. Bottom line: the 'free market' doesn't work because of greed. In the age of 'free-market' destruction of local and national markets, living-wage labor, and competition, Marx may re-emerge as the prophet of the TOWER, writing 150 years before the final results of globalization steamroll us into need/greed post-industrial limbo.o.

Got the TOWER? Get ready to enact your contingency plan and remember, whole that little dose o' chaos coming your way may NOT be 'your fault', using the opportunity for growth which TOWER's

jolting 'creative destruction' MAY imply, is definitely your new, true job description.

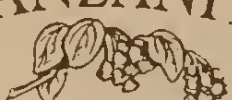
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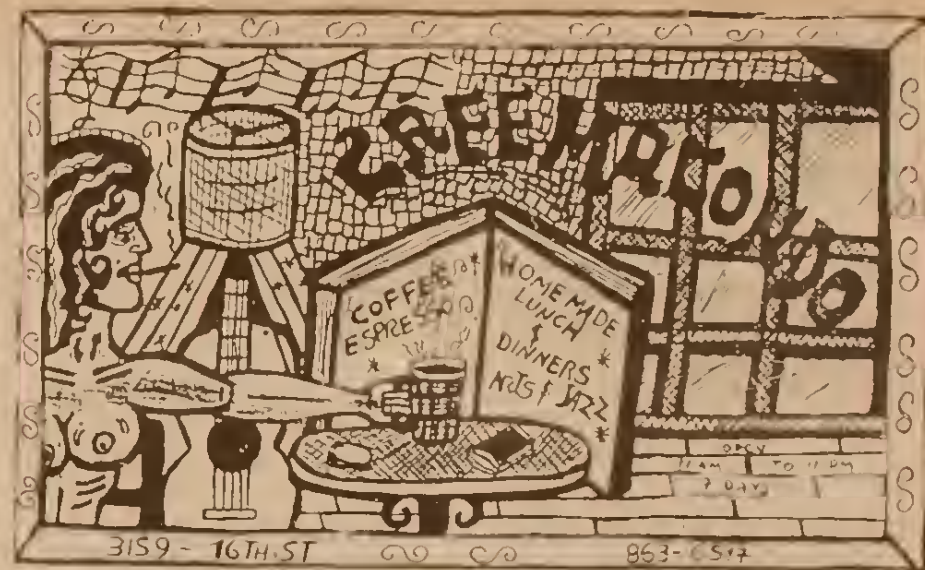
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Paula Tejeda

My encounter with a luminary

MY FIRST APPOINTMENT to meet Durand Garcia, actor and producer of the theater company Luminarias, was blessed and here's why. We were set to meet on a Monday at 11 a.m. and I completely spaced out. When I realized my blunder, I kept visualizing this man patiently wasting his precious time at Los Jarritos Restaurant, waiting to give an interview. Later when Durand phoned, my stomach was in a knot. The first thing he said was, "I'm so sorry". Durand arrived early Monday to his office and naturally, got caught up in his paper work. When he got around to checking his agenda, it was way past the time set to meet. I couldn't believe my luck. I thought, only in the Mission do two people space out on the same appointment.

In 1995, Joseph Pacheco Ponce, the theater director, cast Durand Garcia in a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Intersection for the Arts. Upon Durand's involvement with the project, he took on the heroic, difficult and often under appreciated role of producer. The production was so successful that the Center for the Arts at Yerba Buena Gardens invited the company to inaugurate their Shakespeare-in-the-Gardens Series in August of 1996, and between the impulse of the Center for the Arts commission and the collaboration between Ponce and Garcia, Luminarias solidified into a professional theater company.

The following is a quote from their press release for their upcoming production of *A Winter's Tale*: "Our mission is to produce plays performed by actors of color in non-traditional settings so the cast's ethnicity becomes part of the reality that serves to illu-

minate the plays universality,... thus redefining society's collective perception of who we are and where our place is on the American stage and ultimately in society." In other words, a well written play, a universal play, will deal with a reality that can exist in any society, thus an actor of any ethnicity can give it life. This is how come the *Winter's Tale* by William Shakespeare will unfold in two fictitious locations along Mexico's Caribbean coast. I have been amazed at what imagination and nontraditional settings have done with Shakespeare productions by Rajatabla, the National Theater Company of Venezuela; Mexico's Teatro Campesino e Indígena and Teatro Do Ornitorrinco from Brazil at New York's Shakespeare Theater.

A Winter's Tale opens on November 14 at New College Theater, 777 Valencia Street, and will run weekends through November 30. The opening night performance will be especially significant since it will be a benefit for St. Martin de Porres House of Hospitality, a reputable soup kitchen at 225 Potrero Avenue that has been serving the poor for twenty-six years. The reception takes place at Los Jarritos Restaurant at 20th and South Van Ness. Donations for Opening Night begin at \$20.00, but consider this: you're supporting a community theater group, a soup kitchen (historically the most effective aid to the poor worldwide) and you get to rendezvous at Los Jarritos. You should definitely make it a date. All other ticket prices are on a sliding scale, \$12.50 to \$7.50 for adults, \$5 for youth under 20 and children under twelve get in free. So bring the family. For information call (415) 339-8335.

Encuentro con las Luminarias

MI PRIMERA CITA CON Durand Garcia, actor y productor de la compañía de teatro Luminarias fue hendida por la siguiente razón. Habíamos acordado encontrarnos un lunes a las 11 A.M. y se me olvidó por completo. Cuando caí en la cuenta de lo ocurrido, me pasé el día visualizando a Durand pacientemente perdiendo su tiempo en el restaurant Los Jarritos esperando dar la entrevista. Más tarde cuando Durand telefonó, mi estómago se hizo un nudo. Lo primero que me dijo fue: "Lo siento tanto". Como toda persona ocupada Durand llegó a su oficina el lunes por la mañana, se ocupó con su trabajo y cuando fue a revisar su agenda ya había pasado que rato la hora de nuestra cita. No podía creer mi suerte, sólo en la Misión dos personas no llegan a la misma cita acordada.

En 1995 Joseph Pacheco Ponce, director de teatro, le asignó a Durand Garcia interpretar el papel de Oberon en la producción de *Sueño de un Noche de Verano* presentada en Intersection for the Arts. Al participar Durand en el proyecto se auto-assignó el heroico, difícil y menospreciado rol de productor. La producción fue un éxito tan grande que el Center for the Arts Yerba Buena Gardens invitó a la compañía a inaugurar el Shakespeare-in-the-Gardens Series en Agosto de 1996 y entre el impulso de la comisión del Centro para las Artes y la colaboración entre Ponce y Garcia, Luminarias se solidificó en una compañía de teatro profesional.

La siguiente es una cita del comunicado de prensa de la próxima producción titulada *A Winter's Tale* también de Shakespeare: "Nuestra misión es producir obras actuales por actores de color ubicados en locales poco tradicionales para que el origen étnico del elenco tome parte de la realidad que ayuda a iluminar lo universal de la obra,... por lo tanto

redefiniendo la percepción colectiva de la sociedad de quienes somos y que lugar nos pertenece en el escenario Norte Americano y por ultimo, en esta sociedad". En buenas cuentas, una obra de teatro bien escrita, una obra universal, trata con una realidad que puede existir en cualquier sociedad y puede ser interpretada por un actor de cualquier origen étnico. Esta es la razón que *A Winter's Tale* tomara lugar en dos zonas ficticias a lo largo de la Costa Caribeña de México. Por mi propia experiencia es impresionante lo que lograron con imaginación e interpretaciones poco tradicionales, con obras de Shakespeare, las producciones de la Compañía de Teatro Nacional de Venezuela Rajatabla, Teatro Campesino e Indígena de México, y el Teatro Do Ornitorrinco de Brasil en el New York Shakespeare Theater.

A Winter's Tale comienza el 14 de Noviembre en New College Theater, 777 Valencia Street, y continua cada fin de semana hasta el 30 de Noviembre. La noche de estreno es particularmente significativa ya que es a beneficio de la olla común de St. Martin de Porres House of Hospitality, una olla común de alto prestigio en la 225 Potrero Avenue, sirviendo a los pobres por veintiséis años. Una recepción se celebrará en el restaurant Los Jarritos en la 20 y So. Van Ness. Donaciones para la noche de estreno son \$20.00, pero consideren que están apoyando una compañía de teatro de nuestra comunidad, una olla común (históricamente la ayuda mas efectiva a los pobres) y además un rendezvous en Los Jarritos, así que definitivamente hagan planes de ir. Entradas para las otras funciones son, para adultos \$12.50 a \$7.50 dependiendo de sus ingresos, \$5.00 para jóvenes menores de 20 y gratis para menores de 12 años. Para información, llamar al 415.339-8335.

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Lisa Milos

Sex and Power on Capp

SOME PEOPLE SAY it's "the oldest profession in the world." So on any given day, no one gives a damn, and least of all the media, except when a prostitute gets her head bashed in and it becomes newsworthy. The fact that Jack Bokin, Mission resident and suspect in the attempted murder of a prostitute, was out on bail with three pending sexual assault cases outraged many, including District Attorney Terrence Hallinan. His solution: let's regulate the traffic, so to speak.

Margo St. James, founder of the prostitute's rights group, COYOTE, denounces the proposed regulation but advocates for a "Prostitution Control Board comprised of lawyers, health workers, and sex workers". Neighborhood groups respond to prostitution with a resounding "not on my street" approach. Hollywood glamorizes the call girl with her higher rate of pay and her distinguished clientele.

So it seems it's not so much what you do, but for how much, where and with whom that counts. The truth is, the less you charge for your services, the more expendable you are. That goes for textile workers, farm workers, clerk typists, telephone operators and yes, prostitutes. All of us sell something when we go to work. But how many of us risk losing our lives for a \$5 bill? Why do "they" do it?

Let's say you'd puke, get chills, runny nose and severe stomach cramps if you didn't have your illegal morning and afternoon coffee, which cost you upwards of \$200 a day. Would you go to a drug clinic with a two year waiting list? Let's say you had one marketable asset that was in high demand. Would you use it?

During the three years that I did HIV prevention work in this same area, I spoke with dozens of prostitutes. All of them shared one or two things in common: an abusive father, stepfather or boyfriend during their childhood and/or someone "close" that introduced them to and got them hooked on drugs.

Many have lost one, two or even three children consecutively, to Child Protective Services. Some have even gone to jail on purpose, in an attempt to get clean, only to find the junk inside as well or have nowhere to go when they got out. The more resilient ones

actually had to turn tricks to pay the \$300 a month it cost them to stay clean in a private outpatient drug treatment program, complete with random urine testing and 7 a.m. appointments.

It's not so much an issue of a woman's right to have sex with whoever she pleases, as Margo St. James states in her October 16 *Open Forum* piece for the *SF Examiner*, but one of changing conditions so that women aren't forced into prostitution as a means of survival. None of the women I spoke with had chosen it as a lifelong career. It was either alcohol or drugs that took them down the path, or having their lives pulled right from under them — a lost house, a lost love, a lost child.

Let's talk about supply and demand. Who or what supplies prostitution? Drugs and shame. How the hell did the shit hit the streets to begin with? Since not all prostitutes are addicted to drugs, let's talk about shame. At your most vulnerable years, you're ashamed because you need love, until you've shamed yourself into believing that you don't need anyone at all. It's a clear cut arrangement. You pay, I perform; no hassles, no mess. (Some marriage contracts sound surprisingly similar, don't they? Only it's with the same client.)

Now we arrive at demand. Is it really a demand for sex or something more like a demand for power, the intoxicating power of "owning" someone for a certain period of time because you paid for it?

Don't corporations "own" the lawyers that lie through their teeth on their behalf for \$1000 an hour? The latter has a recognized social contribution, you say? Well then, why aren't prostitutes given the opportunity, through counseling and schooling, to become recognized as sex therapists?

Some of the women spoke of another type of power. The power of feeling needed by comforting a weeping man or the illusion of power that comes with supposedly choosing your clients or your pimp. Or the power of getting paid to give pleasure with the only thing that's really yours, something that nobody can take away from you. Unless, of course, you get killed in the process.

El Sexo y el Poder en Capp

ALGUNOS DICEN QUE es "la profesión más antigua del mundo". Normalmente, a nadie le importa mucho el asunto, mucho menos a los medios de comunicación. Salvo cuando una prostituta es asaltada; eso es noticia. Además llama la atención por el hecho que Jack Bokin — un residente de la Misión que la policía sospechan de haber intentado asesinar una prostituta y que tiene pendientes tres casos de asalto sexual — ha sido puesto en libertad bajo fianza, decisión que enfureció a muchos, incluido al Fiscal del Distrito, Terrence Hallinan. ¿Qué solución ofreció? La de regular el tráfico de la prostitución.

Margo St. James, fundadora de la organización en defensa de los derechos de las prostitutas, llamada COYOTE, denuncia la propuesta de supervisión pero aboga por una mesa de control de prostitutas con puesta por abogados, trabajadores de la salud y trabajadores de la industria sexual.

Los grupos vecindarios se manifiestan siempre en contra de la prostitución, sobre todo si ocurre en la cuadra donde viven. Hollywood les da un toque glamoroso, mostrándolas como mujeres que ganan mucho dinero y que atraen clientela importante.

Al parecer, no importa mucho qué es lo que se hace sino por cuánto dinero, dónde, y

con quién. La verdad es que mientras menos uno cobra por los servicios que ofrece más indispensable uno es. Eso podría aplicarse a las trabajadoras de la industria textil, los trabajadores del campo, los mecanógrafistas, las operadoras telefónicas, y también a las prostitutas. Todos vendemos algo al salir a trabajar. ¿Pero cuantos de nosotros arriesgamos la vida por un billete de cinco dólares? ¿Por qué lo hacen?

Digamos por un segundo que sufrieras los siguientes síntomas: vómito, escalofríos, moco continuo por la nariz y dolores severos en el estómago, y que estos síntomas te atacarían si no tomabas una taza de café en la mañana y la tarde. Digamos que el café fuera ilegal y necesitarías al menos \$200 al día para aliviarte. ¿Dices que sería mejor ir a una clínica para desintoxicarte? Sí, como no, pero con una lista de espera de al menos dos años? Digamos que tuvieras la posibilidad de vender un servicio que estuviera en demanda. ¿Lo aprovecharías?

Durante los tres años que trabajé en la prevención del SIDA en esta misma zona hablé con decenas de prostitutas. Todas tenían una o dos cosas en común: un padre, padrastro o novio abusador durante su niñez y/o algún conocido cercano quien las intro-

dujo a las drogas para que quedara enganchada.

Muchas de ellas ya han perdido uno, dos y hasta tres hijos consecutivamente al servicio de protección para niños. Algunas han intentado liberarse de la droga por medio de la cárcel sólo para encontrarla adentro también. Estas tampoco tienen muchas alternativas al salir.

Las más fuertes han tenido que recurrir a la prostitución para pagar los \$300 al mes que cuesta un programa privado de desintoxicación que incluye pruebas de orina y citas a las 7 de la mañana.

No pienso que el tema de la prostitución sea uno del derecho de la mujer de tener relaciones sexuales con quien le plazca, como afirma Margo St. James en su artículo en la sección *Open Forum* del periódico *San Francisco Chronicle* el día 16 de Octubre, sino el de cambiar las condiciones para que una mujer no tenga que recurrir a la prostitución para sobrevivir.

Ninguna de las mujeres con las que conversé habían escogido la prostitución como una carrera profesional. Generalmente había sido el uso de alcohol o drogas que las llevó por ese camino. Eso, más una tragedia donde perdieron algo importante, una casa, un amor, un hijo.

Hablemos un poco sobre la ley de oferta y demanda. ¿Qué es lo que abastece a la prostitución? Las drogas, la vergüenza y el maltrato. ¿Cómo en diablos llegó esa porquería a nuestras calles para empezar?

Y debido a que no todas las prostitutas son adictas, hablemos un poco sobre la vergüenza y el maltrato. Desde una edad vulnerable a muchos niños y niñas les hacen sentir avergonzados cuando necesitan amor, hasta el punto donde ellos mismos se convencen que no merecen ser amados o que no necesitan a nadie. La prostitución es un arreglo muy claro: Tu pagas y yo entrego mis servicios, sin dramas. (Algunos contratos matrimoniales parecen muy similares, ¿no? Salvo que es con el mismo cliente.)

Ahora llegamos a la demanda por el sexo. ¿No será acaso algo más parecido a la demanda por el poder, el poder de adquisición, de ser "dueño" de alguien durante un cierto periodo de tiempo porque lo has pagado?

¿Acaso las corporaciones no son "dueños" de algunos de sus abogados, los que mienten por ellos por \$350 la hora? ¿Dices que estos últimos cumplen un rol social reconocido? ¿Entonces por qué no se les da a las prostitutas la oportunidad, mediante la consejería y el estudio, de ser reconocidas como terapistas sexuales?

Algunas de las mujeres que conocí mencionaron otro tipo de poder. El poder de sentirse necesitada mientras consuelan a un hombre que llora. La ilusión de poder por el hecho de "escoger" al cliente o al cafiche. O el poder que siente cuando se le paga por entregar placer con algo que le pertenece, algo que nadie podrá quitarle. Al menos que pierda su vida en el proceso.

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Mission District NOVEMBER Calendar

the Dead craft project for kids are all part of the hootenany. 11am, Mission Branch Library, 2601 Mission at 22nd, fifth floor, free, 695-5090.

2

SUNDAY

Día de los Muertos - The Day of the Dead procession begins 6pm at 24th & Bryant, winds its way into the Mission, through Balmy Alley to Garfield Park. Bring candles. Paint thyself.

4

TUESDAY

Civil Sex - It's closing night for the month-long run of "Civil Sex," Brian Freeman's musing on three intertwining topics that don't get mused on much alone, let alone all at once: black masculinity, black gay history and the civil rights movement. 3pm and 7:30pm, The Marsh, 1062 Valencia at 22nd, \$18-22, 641-0235.

Mock the Vote - Stop Saving the Freeway. Vote no on H. Polls open 7am-8pm, free.

5

WEDNESDAY

Better Brown Than Down - It's the return of the return of the return of the Broun Fellini's, which of course means your evening can be full of live, hip hopping jazz and jazzy hopping hips. 10pm, Elbo Room, 647 Valencia at 18th, \$4, 552-7788.

6

THURSDAY

Collective Cars - Collective and cooperative household dwellers are invited to a monthly soup night and presentation on the feasibility and desirability of establishing car co-ops. 6:30pm, The Green House, 230 Ashbury, \$1, 974-4384.

Mystery Date - I have no idea who Rick Hatfield is or what he plays, but I do know he is a very, very busy boy all over the Bay Area. 8pm, Atlas Cafe, 3049 20th Street, free, (707) 545-4491.

Traffic Calming - There is a certain possibility that an as-of-now-unconfirmed hearing might actually be held today to discuss the very real possibility of traffic calming and bike lanes on Valencia Street. Call Supervisor Jose Medinas office to confirm.

7

FRIDAY

Solar Power - It's the artists reception for opening night of *Al Otro Lado de Ahora/From the Other Side of Now*, a photo exhibition by a photographer with an exceptionally suitable last name, Daniel del Solar. 8:30pm, Peña del Sur Cultural Center, 2870 A 22nd Street, free, 550-1101.

Hold the Eggs - At the anarchist cafe and open mic evening to benefit SF Food Not Bombs, you'll experience fine dining, in casual clothes with a subversive atmosphere. Try to look beyond the fact that all of the evenings meal and dessert is entirely vegan. 6pm-11pm, 225 Potrero Avenue, \$1-\$5, 647-5819

Beauty Queen - Follow the lives of three wise queens, from childhood until their eventual meeting at a last chance, run down beauty school, in "The Last Hairdresser" a comic deconstruction of the vicious queen by Doug Holsclaw. Preview night. Theatre Rhinoceros, 2926 16th at South Van Ness, call for time and price, 861-5079

8

SATURDAY

Muckraking the Mouskateers - Get the dirt on (and under) Disneyland with the "Very Unofficial 'Guide to Disneyland Slide Show.'" Rex Everything will escort you through his forthcoming book on the secret back alleys, trap doors, closet skeletons and social/architectural history of the most famous theme park on the planet. 8:30pm, ATA, 992 Valencia at 21st, \$5, 824-3890.

Santa Claws - Why limit holiday exploitation to your kids? This year, involve your beloved pet in the pre-pre-holiday season. The SPCA is graciously providing an authentic, certifiable Santa Claus for your pet to maul in a phologenic manner. 10am-4pm, SPCA Education Annex, 243 Alabama Street, \$10 per pose, 554-3000.

9

SUNDAY

Books Who Love People - Books aren't just for burning anymore. This year's SF Bay Area Book Festival features famous authors, not-so famous authors, publishers, multimedia exhibitions, traditional bookmaking artisans, and "Translating A Culture: Latino Writers Romancing the Gringo World," a panel discussion with Kathleen Alcalá, Ana Castillo, Victor Martinez and Benjamin Alire Sáenz. 12:30pm panel, Concourse Exhibition Center, entrances on 7th and 8th at Brannan, Jessica Mitford Room, \$2 entrance to festival, 908-2833.

10

MONDAY

Cliterary Classics - Local contributors along with writer, editor, and pervert extraordinaire Susie Bright are here in the flesh, to read some naughty selections from *Best American Erotica 1997*. 8pm, Good Vibrations, 1210 Valencia at 23rd, free, 974-8980.

11

TUESDAY

Dress for Success - Local artist and author Daphne Scholinski combines a slide show exhibition of her paintings and a reading from *The Last Time I Wore a Dress*, a new, true, blue memoir of her life as a teenage girl who spent her high school years locked up in a psychiatric ward after being diagnosed with "Gender Identity Disorder." A sort of Dantesque finishing school where way back in 1981 the treatment plan consisted of teaching her to sit different, walk different, put on makeup and wear dresses. 7:30pm, Modern Times, 888 Valencia at 20th, free, 282-9246.

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1

SATURDAY

Dancing with Sticks - You, your money, your honey and your honey's money are invited to "Brazilian Benefit Performances," an evening of live Brazilian music, Capoeira and Maculelê demonstrations, Brazilian dance performances, and money-building exercises for the International Capoeira Encounter. Dancing for all after the performances. 8pm, Brazilian Cultural Academy, 2376 Mission at 20th, \$8-15 sliding, 284-6196.

Moving Books - It's Family Day and Open House at the Mission Branch Library's new temporary digs. English and Spanish story time, Mariachi Jaliciense, and papel picado, a Day of

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12

WEDNESDAY

Green Stink - Author Joshua Karliner is here to discuss *The Corporate Planet*, his investigative tome into the phenomenon of corporate environmental propaganda, aka "green washing." He profiles rotten corporations and local communities affected by (in a not too pretty way) corporate globalization. 7:30pm, Modern Times, 888 Valencia at 20th, free, 282-9246.

13

THURDAY

Hacer la Hustle - Latin Hustle, the brand spankin' new Latino queer comedy troupe featuring Lito Sandoval, Al Lujan, and Jaime Cortez, is hustling for a wad of your money at its finely tuned benefit show co-starring singers, DJ's, drag queens and assorted performance artists. Oh My! 8pm, ATA, 992 Valencia at 21st, \$5-10 sliding scale.

Spoken Words - Victor Martinez, author of *Parrot in the Oven* and *Caring for A House* is the head poet at this poetry reading slash benefit for the youth programs at Jamestown Community Center. Additional readings by neighbors and friends of Jamestown fatten out the evening. 7pm-10pm, Cafe Que Tal, 1005 Guerrero at 22nd, \$8, 647-4709.

Led Paint - The Healthy Children Organizing Project encourages you to testify at a public hearing about proposed legislation to prohibit dry scraping, sanding and water blasting older buildings which contain lead paint (which poisons children). This issue is of particular importance in the Mission where 93% of houses probably have lead paint. 10am, free, call for location and more information, 777-9648.

14

FRIDAY

The Blues - The "Blue Plate Special," a night of solo works by solo performers turned collaborative company 51/50. Craig Landry, Charlotte Higgins, Alison Wright and GiGi Gamble write and star four original, highly acclaimed vignettes. 8:30pm, Theatre Rhinoceros, 2926 16th at South Van Ness, \$15, 861-5079.

15

SATURDAY

Heil on Wheels - Get the scoop on poop during a 20-mile bicycle tour of The City's sewer system. This information-packed, San Francisco Bi-

cycle Coalition tour examines the prehistoric, historic, present and future disposal paths and treatment methods of our most prolific and least talked about natural resource. 10am-3pm, meets at Precita Park, Folsom & Precita, bring water and lunch, \$5, 431-BIKE.

16

SUNDAY

Free Lennie - If you have yet to lift a finger for Leonard Peltier, now's the time to do it. Organizers of the worldwide campaign to free Peltier are calling upon Clinton to grant executive clemency to this long-imprisoned political prisoner. Featured at today's rally are: Ramsey Clark, former US Attorney General and lead defense counsel, Dennis Banks of American Indian Movement, and cultural artists. 2-6pm, Mission High School, 3750 18th at Dolores, 821-6545

17

MONDAY

Bookers - A high-energy reading by local contributors and editor Jill Nagle of *Whores and Other Feminists*, a feminist anthology written by fierce, sex workers. 8pm, Good Vibrations, 1210 Valencia at 23rd, free, 974-8980.

18

TUESDAY

Meditate This - Highly tuned in people have probably already "sensed" this, but for everyone else: Psychic Horizons offers free introductory Meditation Classes this and every Tuesday, for the time being. 7:30pm, Psychic Horizons, 972 Valencia at 20th, free, 643-8800.

19

WEDNESDAY

Tuu Bad - The world's most sensuous instrument - the tuba - is starring along with fellow quinteteers at Venue 9's Creative Music Series night. For your listening pleasure, Tubist Tom Heasley and the rest of the Tuolumne Brass Quintet (who cares what they play) perform original and pillered material tonight. 8pm, Venue 9, 252 Ninth Street, \$6-10 sliding, 626-2169

20

THURSDAY

Kids are Crafty - Instead of the traditional ice

sculpture centerpiece for Thanksgiving dinner, why not let junior help out with holiday decorations - perhaps a maimed pilgrim or two? As luck would have it, the Mission Library is offering a free Thanksgiving craft table decoration class for kids age 4-13. Non-traditional creativity is hopefully encouraged. 4pm, Mission Branch Library, 2601 Mission at 22nd, 5th floor, free, 695-5090.

21

FRIDAY

It's a Bike Thang - Bike-loving ladies are sprucing up their finest bicycles and pulling on their fanciest pants for Ladies Mass, a fee-male only bike ride to reclaim our car-crowded streets. 7pm, meets at the Women's Building, 18th at Lapidge, free.

Singing in the Way - Show #5 of the San Francisco Song Festival invites you to come fully experience the "true form of song" with Songstresses Lisa Mandelstein and Judith Kate and Songster John Bemson. 8pm, Dancers' Group Studio Theater, 3221 22nd at Mission, \$7-12 sliding, 824-5044.

22

SATURDAY

¡Viva la Revolución! - Celebrate the 87th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution with songs from yesterday and today, featuring: Rosa Marta Zárate, the Ballet Folclórico Ensembles and local musicians. 9pm, Capp Street Center, 362 Capp at 18th, \$5, 550-1101.

23

SUNDAY

The Good Book - A reading with Cornel West and his newest book, *Restoring Hope*, an anthology of scholars, artists and public figures, exploring the origins of their political awareness, the relationship between art and politics and the

possibility of hope among African-Americans today. West is the enormously popular author of the enormously popular best-seller *Race Matters*. 6pm, Modern Times, 888 Valencia at 20th, free, 282-9246

25

TUESDAY

The Police and I - The local constabulary and the constabullied have an opportunity to verbally duke it out each and every month at the Mission Neighborhood Police Meeting. If you have anything all to say to our local coppers, now's the time that they have to listen. Good for the whole family. 6pm, Mission Station Community Room, 630 Valencia at 17th, free.

27

THURSDAY

Show Me the Bird - Rather than focusing on the true spiritual or historical meaning of Thanksgiving, this year try focusing instead on making a complete gluttonous pig out of yourself.

28

FRIDAY

Violence! - Torture, Murder, Death! It's movie night at Peña del Sur. Tonight's feature (in Spanish) is a history of the torturous Argentinean military regime during the 1970s, "La Noche de los Lapices." A discussion with an ex political prisoner follows the film. 9pm, Peña del Sur, 2870 A 22nd Street, \$3, 550-1101.

29

SATURDAY

Jazzmen - John Schott and his 6-man band of men star in John Schotts Ensemble Diglossia. A big jazz band in a small food venue. 7:30, Radio Valencia, 1199 Valencia at 23rd, \$3, 826-1199.



EXHIBITION

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GangSpeak

edited by **Deanne Berger-Moudgil**

Resiliency: hope for life beyond prison

By Robert Fraijo Soto

I have survived years of gang and prison life. In order to understand how I survived, I feel I must first look at what I have experienced. And it begins in childhood. My childhood memories take me back to the age of eight. However, before I discuss the recollections of my childhood, I feel I should first explain my name - Robert Fraijo Soto.

My birth name is Robert Mariano Fraijo. But back in the sixties while on parole, I became a fugitive and it became necessary for me to assume a new identity: Robert Mark Soto. Under this new identity, I obtained another social security number and driver's license. For me, this was the turning point. With this new identity, I began to feel like a new person. It is this new person who helped me survive and overcome the many previous dark and violent years. Of course now, everyone concerned, including the law enforcement authorities, have been informed of my name change. Now, to keep in touch with my past, I add the "Fraijo" part of my identity to my name.

Now back to my childhood. I grew up in East LA. The Fraijo family lived in the rural part of East Los Angeles County, Irwindale, California. My grandmother gave my father some land with a garage on it. My family of six lived in this garage, which we used as our bedroom. Our kitchen was a small trailer located next to the garage. The toilet was a hole in the ground, an outhouse that we moved around. We had to heat hot water outside in the open with wood that we gathered. This was our home and this is how we lived.

When I look back to these years of living in East LA and living on that land with the garage and the trailer and outhouse nearby, what I feel most sad about is that my Dad was not around most of the time. We didn't see him very much. I think this was very hard on my mother and it made it very difficult for her to take care of us.

During these early years, our next door neighbor was a Bar. Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, it was completely packed with Mexicans from Mexico who

had been contracted by the United States to come in and work in the late 1940's during World War II, when there was a severe shortage of manual laborers. It was living next to this bar that introduced me to a world of despair and violence. Every weekend there were knife fights in our front yard. It was during one of these fights that I first witnessed, at the age of eight, the murder of another human being. Unfortunately, this was not the first and only murder I witnessed in my front yard; many more were to happen during those savage and brutal years. Although much time has passed since witnessing these events in my early childhood, they remain just as vivid as if they were happening today.

At the time I was witnessing these violent events taking place where I played everyday, I began stealing bicycles. My robbery years were short-lived, as I was promptly arrested and escorted to LA

County's Juvenile Hall and fortunately, turned over to a very compassionate black woman.

I don't remember crying at first perhaps because events were taking place too fast, but what I remember next is being with all these other kids in a huge room. As I sat down, I was handed a cup and given a piece of cake to eat. This turned out to be my first drink of eggnog and first bite of fruitcake. I really enjoyed this treat. But later that night, lying on a narrow cot, I began to think of my mother and started sobbing. A white, blue-eyed man came and took me to this small, quiet but lonely room. I could not control my crying. All I could do was sob and sob and sob. Late that night, I finally cried myself to sleep.

The next day, I was taken out of that room to join the other kids in the huge room again. That night I started to cry but I cried quietly as I did not want to go back to that lonely room again.

And, that's how I spent the majority of my teenage years: growing up in the confines of the California Youth Authority system. It was difficult to stay out of trouble and very easy to graduate from the CYA to the state prison system. Not surprisingly, I was sentenced to the state prison in 1956. In 1974, I was paroled and since then, have never returned to prison. With the help of family, a religious perspective and a college education, I was able to turn my life around.

When I think back to those years in prison, I feel buried alive in a tomb. I was there for so long that I forgot there was a sun. For a while I lost all hope. But slowly, the tomb gave way to a womb of life. Eventually, people began to look up to me, and to ask me for help. Not consciously aware, I had begun the process of healing. I began to realize that I did not belong in that cesspool environment, in that kind of life - no one does! I started to educate myself, in history, especially the history of my people, in politics, in philosophy, in religion and in psychology. Slowly, the wounds began to heal and there was less conflict and confusion and greater peace, power and freedom.

To look back to childhood means to see that I have come a long way to where I am now: working as an instructor in the prison system and having a family. My process of healing and of growth, however, will always continue.

Gang members, this is your column. This is your voice. Send your words, poems, rap songs and art work to Deanne Berger-Moudgil, Column Editor, GangSpeak, to New Mission News, 777 Valencia Street, San Francisco, Ca 94110. You can also call Deanne at 206-8245 or pager her: #227-6338.

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Andy Solow

Traffic Court, A Trip to Hell

Some people think that the criminal justice system in San Francisco is much too lenient. They exclaim that if only the police and the judges in San Francisco were as strict as the ones in San Mateo County, San Francisco would become a crime free utopia too. I used to be one of those people. But, now I'm not so sure.

Speed Trap?

It was around 7:00 a.m. on a beautiful Sunday morning in September. I was running South on 280 through Milbrae on my way to work in San Jose. The cruise control on my new Ford truck was set at 72 mph. I was playing with the radio, trying to decide between KRQR, KLOS, and NPR, when bliss was interrupted by a sleazy local gendarme from Milbrae, up on 280 looking for revenue for the City coffers.

The creep admitted that I was driving safely, but insisted on citing me for exceeding the maximum 65-mph speed limit. In spite of my claims of new car cruise control set at 72 mph, the local yokel cited me for 85 mph and ordered me to appear at the County Court House in San Mateo.

I headed for San Jose again, this time with my cruise control set at 70 mph, I stopped counting after 14 cars passed me like I was standing still.

I later discovered that the fine for 85 mph in a 65-mph zone is \$141 and that I would not be eligible for traffic school because of the alleged high speed. As this could have increased my auto insurance rates by \$300 to \$400 per year for the next three years, I felt obliged to go find a judge and beg for mercy.

I soon discovered that I would have to appear in San Mateo instead of South San Francisco because that is what the arresting officer had written on the face of the traffic citation. The fact that all three San Mateo County courts are in the same county and on the same computer system failed to influence the traffic court clerks to allow me to appear in South City, 20 miles closer to my residence.

Luckily, I had a day off from work during the week before the ticket would have gone to warrant for failure to appear. So I set my alarm for 6:15 a.m. and was headed south on 101 before 7:00. It was a good thing that I had left early, because 101 between the airport and San Mateo was a giant parking lot.

I scurried around on unfamiliar surface streets and managed to make it to the Traffic Court Clerk's window in San Mateo by 8:15 a.m. But, there were at least ten other people who weren't so lucky. They showed up around 8:35 a.m. and were told to come back the next day. The court was half-empty, but rules are rules. After all, they were five minutes late!

The Bailiff

A San Mateo County Sheriff, the bailiff turned out to be a white male Neanderthal with a Napoleon complex. Every bit of 5' 4" tall, the bailiff was masquerading as a

tough guy, hiding behind his gun, badge and uniform. Under the color of authority, the little wimp proceeded to abuse, degrade and emotionally torture anyone in the Courtroom who dared ask him a question. His prerecorded admonitions included a warning that talking while court was in session would lead to expulsion and/or arrest.

In general, traffic court is presided over by a "referee" - an attorney acting as a judge. This particular white male referee seemed stern but reasonable until he threatened to have several people who were whispering inaudibly in the back of the courtroom "...taken into custody" if they uttered "...even one more word." The referee also stopped the proceedings twice to chastise me because one of my feet was protruding into the aisle about six inches. I moved to the middle of the row and tried to control my nervous squirm.

I wasn't paying particularly close attention while awaiting my turn at the guillotine, but there were two cases that I just couldn't ignore.

One young mother was charged with failing to place her child in a safety seat. She explained that her child weighed over 40 pounds, and it was her belief that it is unsafe for children over 40 pounds to ride in a child safety seat. She further explained that she had strapped her child in with a regular lap and shoulder belt which she thought was legal because her child weighs more than 40 pounds. Unfortunately for mom, Vehicle Code Section 27360(a) requires use of a child safety seat for children "...under the age of four years, regardless of weight, or weighing less than 40 pounds regardless of age...."

It was clear that mom was just trying to protect her child. But, the judge admonished mom for misquoting the law, forced her to bring the safety seat into the Court for his inspection, made her promise to use the safety seat until the child reached 4 years of age regardless of weight, and then fined her \$97.

Failure to Appear

Another woman who had been cited for no current tags and no seat belt had registered her vehicle but failed to appear on the seat belt violation because she had been out of state. She had tried to appear twice since then, but had been late to court and was refused admittance both times.

The judge insisted that there was no excuse and fined her \$210 for a f***ing seat belt violation!

After about two hours, I finally got my chance in front of the referee. In violation of both the bailiff's and the referee's instructions, I pled innocent to the charge of 85 mph and offered to plead guilty to exceeding 65 mph. Amazingly, the referee accepted my plea and allowed me to offer up my version of reality. Because of my clean traffic record, the referee fined me \$87 and sentenced me to traffic school. I just hope he doesn't change his mind when he reads this story.

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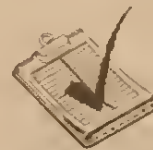
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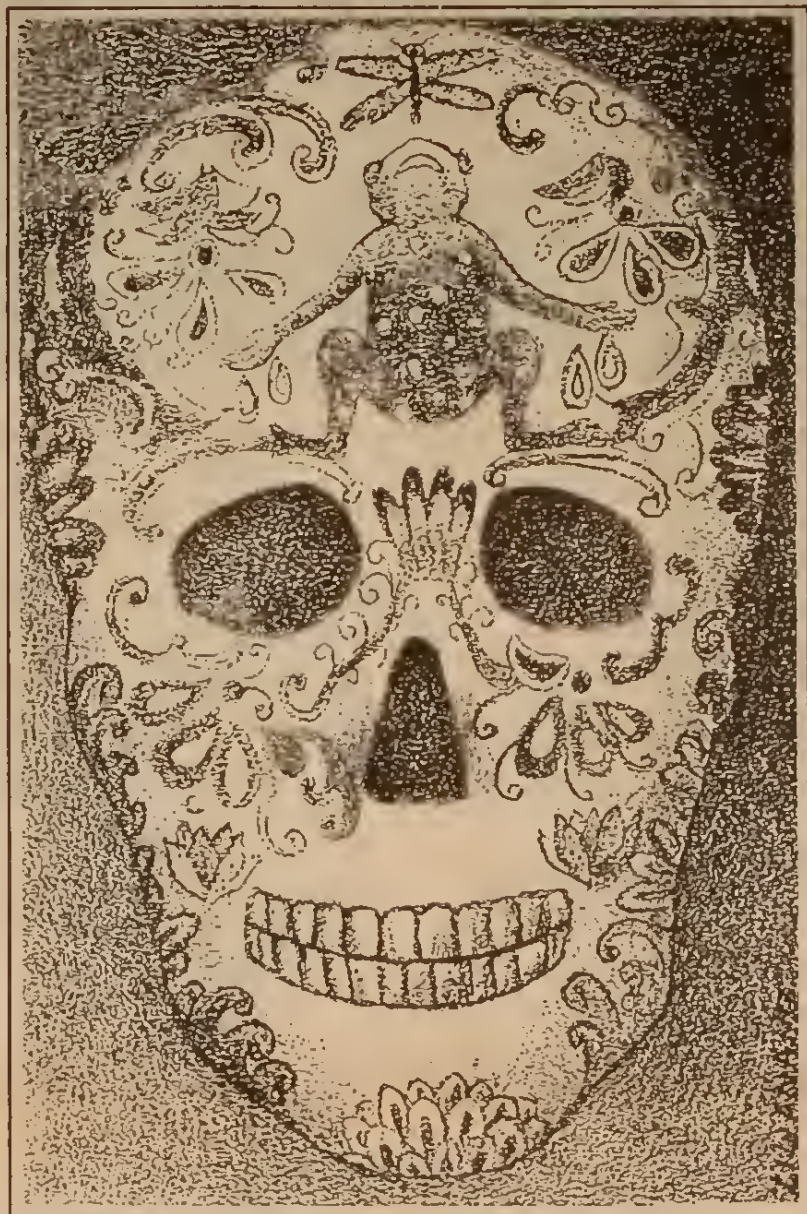
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Neighborhood BEAT



Cops vs Crepes

The Ti-Couz Restaurant team beat cops from Mission Station 6-2, in a soccer game played in Dolores Park on October 19. The day's events also included a park cleanup that drew about six people, followed by a

barbecue that drew about 200 people and necessitated another park cleanup. You can bet that next time, the barbecue will be held first. Photo by Arthur Hudson



Men (and Women) in Black

October 22, about 1500 demonstrators marched down Mission Street to city hall as part of the National Protest to Stop Police Brutality Repression and the

Criminalization of a Generation. The event was noisy but peaceful. Protestors were encouraged to wear black, Photo by Arthur Hudson.

Surf the Library

Ready to learn how to Net? Expand your library and research skills? And all for free? SF Main Library is offering two services this year to help you use library and Internet resources, from the library or home. On two Thursdays, 11/20 and 12/18 at 6:30 p.m., are Internet lectures. On Saturday 11/15 at 2 p.m., a combined lecture on the library catalog and Internet will be presented. On Tuesdays, 11/4, 11/18, 12/2 and 12/16 at 4 p.m., the SF Public Library online catalog and other databases are featured. All lectures will be held in the

Latino Hispanic Community Meeting Room on the Lower Level of the Main Library. Ongoing hands-on classes, which require free tickets that are available Sundays at noon, are held on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings, (except during holiday weeks.) SFPL can be accessed from home via modem or via telnet at <http://sfpl.lib.ca.us>, or call Johanna Goldschmid, Librarian, Information Services, Dept. at 557-3301. For lectures in Chinese, Japanese or Spanish, contact the International Center at 557-4430.



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Immigrant Pride Day #2

Dr. Nelson Artiga, director of the UCSF Family Dental Center at SF General, pointed out some of the warning signs of oral health problems to Mission neighbors who attended Immigrant Pride Day/Dia de la Raza festivities, along 24th Street on October 12. Artiga was one of twenty-five

UCSF volunteers who screened over 700 people at the street fair for diabetes, hypertension and other health problems. Immigrant Pride Day organizers claimed that 35,000 people showed up for the annual event, which included food, live music, and children's activities.



A Do-it-Yourself EPA

Toxic cleanup problems have plagued the lot at 23rd and Treat Streets for the past six years, while the City has gone about an unbelievably drawn out process of purchasing the site for a park.

Since neither the City or the current owners have bothered to post warnings of

the lot's hazardousness, members of the environmental group PODER and kids from Cesar Chavez Elementary School and Horace Mann Middle School went out last month and did it themselves. Photo by Greg Rodin

Get Booked

Open your eyes to... the San Francisco Bay Area Book Festival. The Book Festival, held Nov. 8-9, from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at the Concourse Exhibition Center, will feature Chicano poet/educator Francisco Alarcon on Saturday, Nov. 8, 3:15 p.m. in the Audre Lorde Room; Ana Castillo, author of *The Mixquiahuala Letters*, and Victor Martinez, winner of the National Book Award for Young People's Literature for *Parrot in the Oven*, will be panelists on Sunday, Nov. 9, 12:30 p.m., in

the Jessica Mitford Room. Other headliners include environmental champion and author Wendell Berry, African American mystery writer Walter Mosley, Olympic gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey, poet Nikki Giovanni, musician/spoken word artist Henry Rollins and best-selling author Richard North Patterson. The Festival also hosts more than 330 publishers, booksellers and multimedia people. Youth under 17 are admitted free, adults, \$2 per day.



Starlight Ignites

On October 11, a fire of unknown origin swept through the Starlight Furniture Company at 2217 Mission near 18th

Street. The blaze damaged four buildings on both Mission and Capp Streets, displacing 30 people. Photo by Arthur Hudson

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Green City Alerts

Mission Edition Calendar

In English
& Spanish

Sarah Bardeen/Ian Stewart

• The Bryant Neighborhood Walk happens every Friday evening at 6:30 p.m. Meet at the minipark on 24th Street between Bryant and York and walk for a cleaner, crime-free neighborhood.

• The Balmy/Harrison/Treat at 24th Street Neighborhood Association meets once a month. Call Brooke Oliver for meeting times at 641-4999. Moscone-Las Americas Block Club meets at 6:30 p.m. the second Wednesday of every month at the Mission Rec Center, 2450 Harrison.

• If you're worried about how to dispose of hazardous waste, call the Hazardous Waste Information and Referral Hotline, 554-3444.

• To get a tree planted on your street, call Friends of the Urban Forest. FUF can help organize tree planting in your neighborhood. Call 543-5000. To plant a tree yourself, call 554-6700 for permit information.

Saturday 1

SLUG invites urban gardeners to learn about the threats lead poses in a garden and ways in which compost can help protect you and your plants. Includes a free soil test. 10 a.m. to 12 noon. 415-285.SLUG.

Wednesday 5

SF Recycling Program needs help with waste prevention and minimization projects. To volunteer, come on down to a training meeting at 1145 Market. 5:30 p.m. 415-554.3404.

Saturday 8

SF Clean City Coalition, Neighborhood Parks Council and others participate in today's "Great Sweep" city-wide clean up. The council invites volunteers to link with their neighborhood parks to work; they need your help to become cleaner and greener. In SF, 415-621.3260.

Friends of San Bruno plants the fall hatch of native plants in conjunction with a plant and

hook sale, plenty of snacks and a free barbecue. 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tools available. RSVP Nov. 1. 415-584.7320.

SLUG's crafty gardeners Andrea Woloschuk and Kathi Kinney lead a workshop on "Gifts from the Garden." Leave with a garden gift to give, or keep! 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Fee. 415-285.SLUG.

Wednesday 12

Neighborhood Parks Council holds its last official meeting of 1997. The council, a coalition of over 30 community groups working to make SF's neighborhood parks cleaner, greener and safer. Share information and experience and talk over the issues facing neighborhood parks advocates. 415-621-3260.

Saturday 15

AIDS Memorial Grove invites the public to join in the creation and long-term maintenance of the first living memorial to those lost to AIDS and in support of those living with HIV. Gather weeds, mulch, plant and clear the Grove. 9 a.m. 415-750.8340.

Sunday 16

Bernal Hilltop Native Grassland Restoration Project holds a workparty to eradicate invasive exotic plants, maintain test planting areas, propagate indigenous seed and enjoy the native grassland of Bernal Hill in SF. 415-282.5066.

Green City Project, a San Francisco Bay Area non-profit environmental program, works to increase the compatibility of cities with local natural systems by providing resources to link individuals and groups with each other in community-based ecological activities. GCP is a project of the Planet Drum Foundation. Contact us at 415-285-6556.

• El paseo del barrio de Bryant acontece cada viernes a las 6:30 de la tarde. Reúnanse en el parque sobre la calle 24 entre Bryant y York y caminar para un barrio más limpio y seguro.

• La asociación vecindaria de los calles 24 y Balmy/Harrison/Treat reúne una vez cada mes. Llame al Brooke Oliver para las fechas de las reuniones: 641.4999. El club de la cuadra Moscone-Las Américas se reúne a las 6:30 de la tarde el segundo miércoles de cada mes en el Mission Rec. Center, 2450 Harrison.

• Si estás preocupado sobre como se deshace de los desechos peligrosos, llame al Hazardous Waste Information y Referral Hotline 554.2334.

• Para tener un árbol sembrado en tu calle, llamar a los Friends of the Urban Forest. Ellos pueden ayudar a organizar una siembra de árboles en tu harrio, 543-5000. Para hacerlo por sí mismo, llame al 554.6700 para información sobre los permisos.

Sábado 1

S.L.U.G. invita a los jardineros urbanos a aprender sobre los riesgos que el plomo hace en su jardín y sobre formas que los ahonos puede protegerte y sus plantas. Incluye una prueba de suelos gratuita. De las 10 a 12 de la mañana. 415-285.SLUG.

Miércoles 5

El SF Recycling Program necesita ayuda con sus programas de prevención y minimización de desechos. Para hacerte un voluntario, venga a la reunión de orientación en la 1145 Market. 5:30 p.m. 415-554-3404.

Sábado 8

SF Clean City Coalition, Neighborhood Parks Council y otros participan hoy en el

"Gran Barrido" para limpiar las calles de la ciudad. El consejo les invita a ayudar en sus parques locales; se necesitan su ayuda para ser más limpios y verdes. En SF, 415-621.3260.

Friends of San Bruno Mountain planta su lote de plantas nativas en conjunto con una venta de plantas y libros, comidas y una barba-coa gratuita. 9 de la mañana a los 4:30 de la tarde. Herramientas disponibles. 415-584.7320.

Los jardineros más listos de SLUG, Andrea Woloschuk y Kathi Kinney dirigen una clase sobre los "Regalos del Jardín." Termina la clase con un regalo del jardín a regalar o guardar! 10 de la mañana a la 1 de la tarde. Entrada. 415-285.SLUG.

Miércoles 12

El Neighborhood Parks Council, una coalición de 29 organizaciones de parques locales, se reunirá en la biblioteca central (Main Library) en el centro de conferencias del cuarto piso. ¿Estás interesado en mejorar el parque de su comunidad? La reunión se realiza aquí de 5:15 p.m. a 7 p.m.. Para más información, llame al 621.3260.

Sábado 15

AIDS Memorial Grove invita al público a participar en la creación y mantenimiento del primer recordatorio en vivo para los fallecidos a causa del SIDA y en apoyo para los que padecen del VIH. El trabajo incluye desyerbar, cubrir con pajote y sembrar. Comienza a las 10 de la mañana. Llamar al 750.8340 para más detalles.

Domingo 16

El proyecto del Bernal Hilltop Native Grassland Restoration se dedica a desarraigar plantas exóticas dañinas, mantener el área de siembra de pruebas, difundir semillas nativas, y además se goza de las escondidas maravillas de la ciudad. 282.5066.

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Welfare reform means changes in the lives of millions of Americans. Within two years, most families who are currently on welfare must move into the workforce or risk losing their benefits.

In San Francisco alone there are nearly 11,000 families — mostly single mothers and their children — who will be affected by the work requirements and time limits in the new federal law.

The business community of San Francisco is responding to the challenges posed by welfare reform with San Francisco Works. San Francisco Works will help 2,000 San Franciscans make the transition from welfare to work.

San Francisco Works is a partnership of the Committee on Jobs, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of the Bay Area.

San Francisco Works is intended to demonstrate new techniques for helping families on public assistance move toward self-sufficiency.

The centerpiece of San Francisco Works will be a competitive bidding process for selecting several local nonprofit agencies and collaboratives to:

- prepare former welfare recipients for private sector jobs in a variety of industries

- work with the business community to place job-ready candidates in jobs, and
- provide the necessary supports to help participants retain those jobs and increase their net income over time.

San Francisco Works was started with the generous support of the local companies listed to the right. But we need your help to get the job done. San Francisco Works is looking for donors, volunteers and local businesses willing to hire screened, trained candidates.

Also, if you or someone you know is involved in employment training and placement or a related field, give San Francisco Works a call.

San Francisco Works soon will release a public Request for Information to identify community-based agencies interested in helping us reach our job placement goal. To learn more about how to get involved with San Francisco Works — as a contributor, a volunteer or a contractor — please call 1 (800) 273-6222.

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A stark and forboding plaza. Photo by Nancy Opitz.

Neighborhood takes aim at the 16th St. "Nightmare Plaza"

by Victor Miller

Over 20 years ago when BART was first built, the powers that be decided benches in the boarding areas were unnecessary since trains would be arriving every few minutes to whisk travelers away for a mere five cents. We were also told that the above ground plazas would add something special to each community. Well, if you've had to park your butt on hard concrete waiting an hour for a train that costs considerably more than a nickel to ride, you know things didn't quite go as planned down below. If you've spent anytime at 16th and Mission, you know that that something special that BART adds is a crime-ridden eyesore.

On October 25, a group of about sixty Mission residents, public employees, business representatives and nonprofits got together to come up with solutions to the Plaza nightmare. After a brief presentation by Mission Housing Development Corporation and Urban Ecology, the two nonprofits that are facilitating the plaza overhaul project, people broke up into small groups around tables with cardboard scale models of the infamous intersection, and began to brainstorm about what could change and what things *had* to change.

The groups seemed to be genuinely diverse, welcome change from many community meetings. The one observed by the *News* had a landscaper, a BART employee, an employee of the 16th and Mission Wells Fargo, an arts administrator, a homeless activist and a neighborhood activist.

As it did in the other groups, attention, focused on the southwestern corner with the large, circular, toilet bowl-like BART entrance in the center, and the real life/low life Decaux toilet in the corner (the most flushed facility of its kind in San Francisco). Nobody liked the starkness of the Plaza or the way the centrally placed entrance broke the plaza up into small spaces good only for creepy, drug dealing nooks. Placed where it is now, the Decaux toilet creates a nasty little bottleneck where passersby must squeeze past the ancient junkies, perpetually hawking "outfits, outfits, outfits." All of the small groups wanted the BART entrance moved to one side by the bus stops, or broken into two small entry ways on the streetside corner. The different groups all had their own ideas about what to do with the freed up space, from a speaker's platform to a mini-amphitheater with permanent seating.

People wanted to see commercial and entertainment activities in the plazas that would drive serve to drive away the negative criminal commerce that occurs there now. There were proposals for storefront businesses facing onto the plaza, as well as vendors' booths and informational kiosks in the plaza, itself. One unique idea was to erect a video billboard overlooking the plaza that would have a perpetually changing art display. Kids from St. John's Educational Threshold Center did their own mock-up of an ideal BART plaza, which included a four-story cylindrical observation tower that looked like a giant rocket

ship, and a video arcade where fast passes were sold.

These ideas need two things to make them work. One thing is what one of the small groups called "a change of ownership." Right now the dope dealers, hookers and their customers exercise effective "ownership." The fact that their claim is periodically challenged by the police only gives the plaza a sleazy war zone atmosphere. Other activities by other people must begin to happen on the plaza to assert a broader "community ownership" of the space.

The second essential is money. Even modest changes in the physical make up of the plaza are going to require serious funding. The types of major spatial rearrangements, which everyone seemed to feel were vital, are going to require a lot of serious money.

When one of these plaza resurrection meetings was first held over a year ago, the results were not acted on by BART, or other transportation agencies whose beancounters and redtappers said they needed specific plans and budgets before they'd move. Now that Mission workers and residents have once again spelled out their ideas about a kinder, gentler 16th and Mission, a second meeting will be held on December 6 to figure out how to change the plaza from what it is now to what people want it to be. This will be the hard part. All Mission residents, business owners, employees and just plain appreciators of the 'hood are urged to attend.

Call Doug Shoemaker at 864-6432, extension 315, for more information.

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Poems of the Month

edited by **Barbara Bennett**

A NIGHT IN

something is allowed entry

it comes through the window
careening in
but unlike sound
it's more a shift

of chord:
the fragile instant music
picks its own pocket,
inverts
and then explodes once more,

rounding off the shoulder
of my sweaty gown.

thus my night.

no
bar neon
no
eight ball crash into the street
and sadly
no

pretty face emerging 34 times with
laughter
out of a dark corner her date seems
to use so well.

it's late.
I have pants shirt socks
on
-a human story.

Pete Simonelli



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Photos by Vickie Rega

The Roxie Cinema is the only surviving independent repertory cinema in San Francisco. This refreshingly funky movie house has been the anchor business around which the 16th Street revival has formed, flourished and prospered. Whether its Hong Kong action flicks, vintage American schlock or Japanimation erotica, you're in the mood for the Roxie has it. This neighborhood celluloid treasure trove also serves as a showcase for unknown and up and coming filmmakers. And, good news, a new mini-theater will be added next year.

The Roxie is located at 3117 16th. Call 863-1087

Blondies Bar & No Grill (and no apostrophe) has served as the nerve center for the New Bohemia since 1990. Self described as a "swank neighborhood bar in the hippest underground scene in San Francisco", Blondies offers the best martinis in the city, the famous Mega-Martis with a culinary flare. Blondies has swing lessons every Monday night and the best local swing bands every Saturday night for your happy footed pleasure. No cover, no minimum ever, even New Year's Eve. Blondies also has Blondie (female) and Dagwood (canine).

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Richard Pitt

Rethinking Computers

A recent article in the *Atlantic Monthly* questioned the assumption that computers in schools improve teaching and learning. This is interesting in the light of the Clinton Administration goal of having "computers in every classroom" and the general enthusiasm for computers in many San Francisco schools. In fact, a California task force recommended that the state spend \$11 billion on computers in California schools in an attempt to raise the academic level, which is one of the lowest in the country.

Up until now, the general opinion among many educators and politicians is that computers can greatly improve learning abilities and there has been a significant quantity of funds given to achieve this, often at the expense of other programs. The article, however, discussed the fact that research has not definitively shown that this is the case. A presidential task force that influenced the Administration's policy used research studies that have been shown to be highly ambiguous, and members appointed to the task force were all technology advocates.

One of the issues brought up in the article were questions regarding the effects on the brain when computers are used as a means of learning. Although it was admitted that nobody knows exactly what happens in the brain from computer use, the article quoted from a book by an educational psychologist Jane Healy, *Endangered Minds: Why Children Don't Think and What We Can Do About It*, which expressed the opinion that "visual stimulation is probably not the main access route to nonverbal reasoning. Body movements, the ability to touch, feel, manipulate, and build sensory awareness of relationships in the physical world, are its main foundations." Healy commented that "in schools, traditionally, the senses have had little status after kindergarten."

While there is obviously a role for com-

puters in education, a big question is when is it appropriate to introduce them? It needs to be understood that computers only encourage learning in a particular way: a linear, narrow sequential input that doesn't stimulate the imagination and a more complete use of the brain's functions. This style of learning may also be even more difficult for children with existing learning disabilities such as dyslexia. It is now understood that dyslexia, which commonly manifests in reading, writing and speaking difficulties, and seriously impairs all forms of learning, affects a large number of children. It has not yet been researched how computers may affect these children who already have learning problems.

Some educators also feel that introducing computers to young children under the age of eleven creates exactly the opposite input that the children need. Young children need much more physical and emotional interaction in a real environment; they need to learn how to feel, think and socialize among themselves, and to acquire the necessary academic skills. If education is reduced to the kind of narrow, one dimensional tasks that computers encourage, it can detract from the experience a child needs to develop their own inherent abilities.

It is now being seen how the attention span of children who watch a lot of television is being seriously impaired. Their experience becomes passive and they lose the ability to entertain themselves. Until it is clearly proven that computers won't do a similar thing, in spite of their interactive nature, is it such a good idea to have a computer in every classroom? Resources for education are already stretched. Other more essential programs may have to be cut. Perhaps we should question whether this is what we want?

Richard Pitt RS Hom, CCH is a homeopathic consultant. His office is at 3689 18th St, San Francisco. Tel 415-565-0979.

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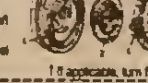
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Round World Music Review

Robert Leaver



ENCUENTRO 1997

This Friday, November 7 and Saturday, November 8 will be the 17th annual "Encuentro del Canto Popular" at the Great American Music Hall, here in San Francisco. The Encuentro seeks to bring together a wide selection of Latino musicians to celebrate the diversity of music in Latin America and within the Latino community here. In the recent past, we have been treated to some of Cuba's greatest talent, including Irakere, who were joined by Carlos Santana and Chucho Valdes' father, Bebo Valdes, and the legendary rumberos, Los Papines. This year will follow suit with two groups from Cuba gracing the lineup.

Back in 1993, the *Encuentro* booked the Cuban group *Mezcla* for its annual show and all the members of the group were denied visas, with the exception of the group's leader, Pablo Menendez. The *Encuentro* subsequently sued the State Department over this matter, in a high profile case that highlighted the mean-spiritedness of U.S. policy toward Cuba. Many believe that it was this case that forced the U.S. government to define its policy toward visiting artists from Cuba and as we have witnessed the last couple years, has helped open the door for them to visit under a cultural exchange provision. At any rate, the *Encuentro* must be applauded for its vigorous pursuit and support of cultural exchange.

This year, November 7 kicks off with *Mezcla* as the headliner. The group is led by guitarist/singer Pablo Menendez who grew up in Oakland, and mixes Cuban son with rock, reggae and jazzy elements in a truly unique mix. Cantos, their recording with famed Afro-Cuban folkloric singer Lazaro Ros, stands as a breakthrough fusion record. They will be supported by *Bellita*, who plays keyboards and sings with *Mezcla*, and her own small ensemble, *Jazztumbatá* who will be celebrating their recent CD release, mixing son, jazz, bossa and folklore with a sensual woman's touch. Also on the bill Friday are San Francisco's own Clucano fusion band, Dr.

Loco's Rockin' Jalapeño Band, who mix Mexican-American music with funk, rock and song. Opening up will be Grupo Arauco who play Andean music.

Saturday, November 8 will again feature

Mezcla along with the rock en español group *Oriza*, who are based here in San Francisco and record for the local label, 4 Records. Also featured will be SF-based Venezuelan artist Jacqueline Rago y su grupo Campana and Nuyorican poet Piri Thomas, author of the famous *Down These Mean Streets*, who will put his lyric to the accompaniment of the Latin-funk group, Oaktown Irawo. Both nights promise to be true musical events and Great American Music Hall will provide a great ambience. Tickets are available at Round World Music at 593 Guerrero Street, (415) 255-8411, Modern Times Bookstore at 888 Valencia Street, and Galeria de La Raza at 2857 24th Street.

One of the more memorable recent performances was Susana Baca from Peru, who played at La Peña last month, celebrating her first international CD release. She is a sheer joy to watch and hear, a very sensual singer backed by an acoustic guitar, bass, congas, percussion and cajón (wooden box). She became well known for her songs on the collection of Afro-Peruvian classics released by David Byrne's label, *Luaka Bop*. Her new, self-titled CD was recorded in Peru by producer Greg Landau and for the first time, we can hear rootsy Afro-Peruvian music as it should sound: with booming cajón, jazzy bass and Spanish guitar influences along with other Afro-Caribbean percussion. This CD should place her squarely on the world stage.

On Sundays, Round World Music will be starting a musical mix night at Cafe Cocomo, located at 650 Indiana Street, just above Mariposa Street, featuring guest DJ's, door prizes, giveaways and a house band: Descarga with Omar Sosa, Greg Landau, Jesus Diaz, Rahsaan Fredericks and others. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the band starts at 7 p.m.

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